

the chronicle

Soldiers tackle a marathon event on the water

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Clear vision for skills at the craft centre

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The flap's over now lost parrot has been found

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Back to the dance floor for Paddy, 77



Reunited – Paddy and Nicko

STOURBRIDGE Salsa granny Paddy Jones is back in business after her partner Nicko Espinosa went back to her.

She says the temperamental Spaniard – who had stormed out of town saying he would never work with her again earlier this year – has decided it was worth his while to stay on her good side.

So the 77-year-old slipped back into her dancing shoes and the pair have already been back on TV.

"I think he realised it was worth his while to keep in touch with me," said the grandmother-

of-seven from Stourbridge, who now lives in Spain.

Paddy, who used to run Paddy's Fabrics in Coventry Street, Stourbridge, moved to Spain with her husband David in 2001, and starting dancing as a way to cope when he died shortly afterwards.

She shot to fame in the Spanish version of Britain's Got Talent, called Tu Si Que Vales, in 2009, and has been showing off her dancing skills around the globe ever since.

The fall-out with Nicko, 40 years her junior, came after the pair were kicked off Argentinian

talent contest Showmatch.

Paddy had been visiting family in England and her replacement on the show irritated judges to such an extent that they voted her off.

Nicko, she said, had been so annoyed, he had not broken her news to her.

Truth

"When I went back, an interviewer asked me how I had felt when he told me we were out – and I had to tell the truth, that he hadn't," she said.

"There was outrage from everyone – groups started on

Facebook calling him names that are all unprintable.

"He was furious with me, but what else could I have said?"

The pair are now back dancing but in the meantime Paddy is looking at moving out of her villa in Gandia and into a retirement home in Benidorm.

"It seems surreal – I don't feel like I should be looking at retirement homes, but here we are," she said. "You have to plan for the future."

Paddy will next return home in September, to see the christening of her first great-grandchild George, who was born in March.

HOSPITAL PARKING COSTS UP

PATIENTS and visitors will have to pay more to park at the Corbett Hospital in Stourbridge after fees were increased for the second year running.

Charges have risen by up to eight per cent, which means it now costs £5.40 to park for more than three hours – up from £5.

The new prices have been introduced by Interserve, the private company which runs the car parks at Russells Hall and the Guest hospitals in Dudley. The prices also apply there. One councillor has already attacked the rises.

Hospital bosses said they were "disappointed" that charges had been increased again since August last year. But they said people would still be able to park free for 30 minutes.

Patients receiving treatment on three or more occasions per week in the oncology and renal units would not be charged, they added.

The increases have come under fire from Dudley councillor Bryan Cotterill. He has previously campaigned for fees to be dropped.

He said he was "appalled" by the decision adding: "It just doesn't seem fair that sick people are being charged to visit hospital. It just seems immoral."

The cost of one hour's parking has gone up by 10p to £1.50. The new fee for one to one and a half hours has also increased by 10p to £1.90. The cost of parking between one and a half and three hours is now £3.20 – up from £3.

Dudley Group of Hospitals chief executive Paula Clark said: "We are disappointed that Interserve has decided to increase parking charges for our patients. We recognise that our PFI partner is entitled to review parking changes annually as part of their contract and they have, in the past, managed to keep the charges down."

No-one at Interserve was available for comment.

Cheers to a growing trend



Members of the association celebrating the completion of work – vice-chairman Nick Geoghegan, back left, fundraiser Margaret Rogers and chairman David Horton, with, front, secretary Joan Jones, and allotment holder Marie Roberts

GARDENERS in Stourton are celebrating after the completion of the first allotments in the area where they live.

An overgrown field in Greenforge Lane has been transformed into 30 plots which have been taken on by local residents.

An independent allotment committee was set up to look at providing a site after people approached Kinver Parish Council.

It has proved such a hit that all the plots have now been filled and seven people are on the waiting list. There has been a surge in people clamouring for a garden spot

across the region with the credit crunch and soaring popularity of growing vegetables thought to be behind the trend.

The land, which Kinver Allotment Association rents from a farmer, has been given an overhaul thanks to funding from two memorial grants totalling £3,000 which helped pay to get water onto the site and a £7,380 Awards For All lottery grant.

Kinver Parish Council also donated £400 to help with the clear-up work.

To celebrate the work finishing, a barbecue was held at the site.



Accident victim Brenda Wilson

Eighty jobs at Tesco

AROUND 80 jobs will be created when construction of a £27 million Tesco supermarket is completed later this year at Burnt Tree Island.

Started in March, the building is rapidly taking shape with the sales floor already completed.

Bosses said there would be more than 80 vacancies which they would be looking to fill closer to the completion date.

They said it was hoped other positions would be taken by staff from the previous Burnt Tree store, which closed in January.

Some workers are worried they will be asked to take a reduction in hours to accommodate new positions. Bosses refused to rule out reductions in hours but said this would be "rare".

Teething trouble for dental job

A DUDLEY businessman who puts a smile on the face of patients as far away as Spain is struggling to expand his dental business – despite being inundated with work.

National advertising campaigns for a dental prosthetics technician to join Steven Burchell's team have failed to generate a single application. Clinical dental technician Mr Burchell, who runs the Denture Clinic in North Street, blames a flood of cheap prescriptions from China.

Mr Burchell said: "The skills base is being compromised by a range of work being put out to foreign labs. I need someone who can produce high quality dentures."

Anyone interested should call him on 01384 348594.

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Cricket ground hosting ale fair

REAL ALE fans can raise a glass at a second annual Black Country beer festival while enjoying cricket and football matches.

Lye Cricket Club is hosting the festival at its ground along with brewery Sadlers Ales between August 18 to 20. Visitors to the event can sample a selection of ales and ciders at the ground, in Stourbridge Road, Lye.

During the event people will also get the chance to watch matches of the sports clubs based at the ground.

Cricket matches will be played on both Friday and Saturday afternoon.

Separate

Lye Town football club, which shares the ground, have an FA Cup match on the Friday at 7.45pm. Organisers advise there will be a separate charge for this match. There will also be live music each night in a large marquee.

The entrance fee for the festival is £10 including £5 of drinks vouchers, a programme and a beer festival pint glass. Admission for all Campaign for Real Ale members is £8.

Food and other refreshments will be available.

The event starts on Thursday, August 18 from 6pm until 11pm and from midday to 11pm on Friday and Saturday.

Arrest after fight

A TEENAGER has been arrested after a fight at Dudley bus station. The brawl broke out at 8.45pm last Thursday. A metal bar was recovered.

Soldiers take 16-hour endurance challenge

SOLDIERS from the Black Country who returned from the Afghanistan battlefield just weeks ago completed a 92-mile endurance challenge for charity.

The group of 20 from the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry's Dudley-based A Squadron cycled, ran and canoed their way through three Midland counties in an attempt to raise more than £1,000 for ABF The Soldier's Charity.

Setting off from Stafford at 6am on the Saturday before last, relay groups cycled to Lincomb Lock, Stourport. There they got in canoes to paddle to Worcester. They finished after 16 hours in Warwick Market Place where they were greeted by the mayorress.

Cpt Paul Davey, who organised the Yeomans Tri-County Triathlon event, said he was "delighted" with how the day had gone.

"It was brilliant. We went through and finished comfortably in the time we were aiming for," he said.

"It was very challenging, and very demanding, but it was a fantastic event for a very good cause."

Among the soldiers taking part was Lt Cpl Matthew Burns, aged 23, from Coseley, who joined the Dudley TA six years ago.

He said: "I wanted to take part in this as it was a challenge for us, as well as raising money for a good cause."

Father-of-two – and expecting a third – Sgt Andy Morris, 39, from Quarry Bank, was also in the group.

Storeman

He said he has been with the TA for 15 years, and now works full-time as a storeman and driver for the centre based in Vicar Street, Dudley. He returned from Afghanistan in April after a six-month tour, having visited Iraq in 2003.

"I thought I'd join in with this event as it's a worthwhile charity," he added.

Many of the soldiers who were part of the recent tour were honoured by The Queen at the Yeomanry's homecoming parade earlier this month in recognition of their work in Helmand.

The Queen's presentation of medals to members of the RMLY was an immensely proud and hugely important event for us," added Cpt Davey.

To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/RMLY



Members of the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry at Lincomb Lock

Father admits firearm offence

A MAN used a toy gun to frighten away a group of men who arrived at his home and demanded he fight them, a court heard.

Sean Jones, aged 23, cocked the gun in plain view of the men after they turned up at his flat in Trinity Road, Amblecote, and taunted him on March 11, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Judge Michael Dudley heard Jones had grabbed the gun, which was sprayed black to make it look real, in a bid to scare them away.

They fled; police were later called and Jones arrested.

He admitted one count of possessing an imitation firearm and was given a 12-month community order along with supervision for the same period.

Dispute

Mr David Lees, prosecuting, said a dispute had been ongoing between Jones and one of the group and following a disagreement on Facebook, the complainant and others arrived at his home.

Mr Lees said Jones remained inside the flat but was seen through the window holding what looked like a black handgun. "The complainant and others believed it to be a real gun and fled," he said.

Mr Lees said the gun was later tested and found to be an air pistol which shot blank plastic pellets.

Mrs Samantha Powis, defending, said Jones's partner and child, two, were in the flat at the time and he had feared for their safety.

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Focus on fire station merger bid

PLANS to merge two Black Country fire stations and axe a 24-hour fire crew will be in the spotlight at public meetings next month.

Halesowen and Cradley Heath fire stations will merge if proposals by West Midlands Fire Service are given the go-ahead.

Two meetings will be held at the start of September with Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris expected to attend along with councillors and members of the fire service. The first will be on September 1 at Lutley Community Centre, in Brookwillow Road, Halesowen between 6pm and 8pm.

People can also attend a second meeting on September 2. This will be held at Reddall Hill Primary School, in Trinity Street, Old Hill, Cradley Heath, between 6pm and 8pm.

The proposals were initially discussed around two years ago but were put on hold following a public outcry.

But now the scheme has been resurrected by the fire service as it deals with a cut in its budget of up to 12.5 per cent by the Government.

Car dealers is now open

A NEW Skoda car showroom has opened in Stourbridge.

Trust Skoda has opened a seven-car showroom on Envile Street. It offers new and used car sales as well as aftersales care and servicing.

Trust Group UK, formed in March 2006, currently owns four dealerships in the West Midlands.

Dave Gerrard, Scott Bobberley and other bus drivers embark on the trek

A DOZEN bus drivers walked from Dudley to Stourbridge to raise money for a hospital.

The colleagues, joined by family and friends, traced the eight-mile 246 bus route from Dudley bus station to Stourbridge town centre to help raise money for the children's unit at Russells Hall Hospital.

It was organised by driver Dave Gerrard, aged 67, who is based at Pensnett depot and persuaded his National Express colleagues to get involved.

"It was tough going but we all enjoyed it. It was worth the sore feet for the money we have managed to raise," said Mr Gerrard, who lives in Amblecote and drives on a number of routes around Dudley.

They managed to complete the walk in just over two hours on Sunday and it is hoped they will raise just over £1,000.

The money raised will help pay for overnight beds needed for parents to stay with their children when they are poorly.

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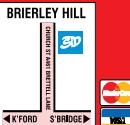


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Hospice gets new leader for funding fight

A NEW chief executive will take over at a Black Country hospice to guide it through "the greatest challenges in its history" as it battles for funding and looks to expand its service.

Anglican priest Peter Holliday takes over at Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge in September. He will oversee long-term plans to treat patients at home.

He will also keep on his current post as chief executive of St Giles Hospice in Lichfield.

Bosses say Mr Holliday has been appointed to help the hospice raise more cash.

Donations form over 80 per cent of the hospice's £2.25million annual running costs, but have plummeted by up to half.

His responsibilities will also include managing the 140 full and part-time staff.

He said: "The hospice is facing, arguably, the greatest challenges in its entire history."

Crisis

"The UK economy is facing its biggest crisis for more than 60 years worse than any since the NHS itself came into being."

"National policies with regard to long-term care and end of life care are changing."

"Mary Stevens Hospice is facing major threats to its funding sources. Hospices will need to adapt to changes in palliative care."

Chairman Gwynne Bellis said the hospice was looking to increase the 200 patients for whom it cares and the 90 who attend as day patients at home.

Mr Holliday is a chartered accountant and deputy chairman of trustees of the hospice support charity Help the Hospices.

Strawberries and tea for cancer charity



Lorraine Attwood, front left, Rebecca Higgins, aged four, Val Highway, Sheila Hulse and Olivia Brown, two, at the strawberry tea party held for charity

LACE tablecloths and home-made goodies at a Stourbridge church hall as parishioners held their third annual charity Strawberry Tea Party.

Visitors to Cobden Street Methodist Church in Wollaston were able to buy fresh fruit and veg grown in local allotments, home-baked cakes and biscuits, and a selection of bric-a-brac. Organiser Val Highway said she was "thrilled" with the success of the event the weekend before last, which raised more than £340 for Breast Cancer Care.

Prizes

"There were a lot of other things going on at the weekend so I had worried beforehand, but a lot of people came," said Mrs Highway, aged 65, of Laburnham Street, Wollaston.

"Several businesses in the village donated prizes to the raffle. I would like to thank all my friends and family who helped with the event."

Strawberry Tea Parties are a national drive to raise money for Breast Cancer Care.

For more information on hosting a party, visit: www.breastcancercare.org.uk

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Landlady sold drugs as pub income fell

A LANDLADY started selling drugs from her Black Country pub to boost her income when trade at the venue plummeted, a court heard.

Mother-of-three Joanne Field, aged 42, was caught with 22 small wraps of cannabis at the Red Lion in Brierley Hill High Street.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court she admitted possessing the drug with intent to supply.

The court heard she had paid £400 for a supply of cannabis. Miss Heidi Kubik, defending, said Field and her husband Joe had tried to boost trade at the pub.

But she said last Christmas he was made redundant from his job in civil engineering and started "drinking the profits".

Miss Kubik said it was suggested to Field that she could make money selling cannabis and she made a "foolish decision". She added: "It was an easy option that has resulted in nothing but trouble."

Judge Martin Walsh told Field: "You have avoided going to prison by the skin of your teeth. It is highly unlikely you will be able to obtain a licence for the sale of alcohol in the future."

Stripped

Her husband now runs the pub after Field was stripped of her licence, the court heard.

Field, of Lancaster Road, in Brierley Hill, admitted possessing the drug with intent to supply and was given a 12-month jail term suspended for two years, told to carry out 200 hours' unpaid work and to pay £260.

Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting, said police raided the pub and found a carrier bag containing 22 small wraps of cannabis and £380 in cash. She said she started selling the drugs to supplement income when trade fell off at the pub.

Clear vision for skills boost at glass centre



Sammy Walsh gets ready for the new craft events

CRAFT DISPLAYS and demonstrations are to be expanded at a Stourbridge centre to give more artists a chance to show their work.

Ruskin Glass Centre in Amblecote plans to bring 10 additional artists on site on the last Saturday of every month under the new scheme. This will include craft and textile workers along with jewellery makers. As well as showing their works they will also hold demonstrations.

All 17 artists permanently based at the centre, in Wolaston Road, will also be operating during the events providing more activities for visitors. The first expanded Saturday opening will be on August 27.

**£475,000
pay-off
for boss**

THE BOSS of a Black Country-based aerospace company that ended up in court over the £2.5million sale of a subsidiary quit the business with a pay-off worth nearly £500,000, it has been revealed.

Kim Ward was chief executive when Hampson Industries, based in Brierley Hill, sold its Hampson Precision Automotive (HPA) business to a consortium of private investors last year.

The sale ended up in the High Court when the consortium alleged Hampson failed to disclose full details about HPA's customers – in particular that one major client was set to walk away.

The consortium, Elrion Precision Holdings, won the case in April. In June, Hampson agreed to pay £1.5m plus a contribution towards court costs to the consortium. Hampson Industries' annual report reveals that Mr Ward, who resigned a year ago, got £475,755 as compensation.

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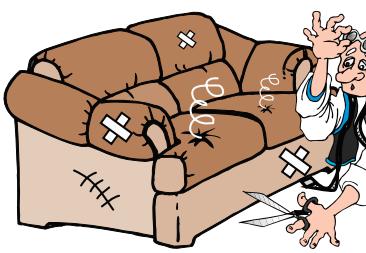
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PLANS to tackle a parking "nightmare" around a Black Country hospital are set to be rubber-stamped by councillors after years of complaints from residents.

The restrictions are intended to deter drivers from parking near Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley.

Residents say staff and visitors continue to clog the surrounding streets with cars, despite the opening of a 691-space car park at the hospital site.

They have welcomed the plans but say they need to be enforced as soon as possible. Access would be restricted in some roads other than for residents, while parking would be banned in others.

The council recently held a public consultation and received 120 messages of support. But bosses at Russells Hall had opposed the idea.

Now the plans, costing about £38,000, are due to be discussed at Central Dudley Area Committee in October. If approved, they will go to full council.

Struggle

Christina Brett, a 38-year-old mother-of-five, of Byron Street, said: "It is an absolute nightmare here, so the sooner something is done the better."

"I'm happy that we seem to be moving in the right direction but it is taking a long time. They are parked here from 6.30am to late at night and we struggle to get near our homes."

Among the plans are restricted access to Pearce Close, Dereton Close, Abbotsford Drive, Hilder Crescent and Elgar Crescent and waiting restrictions in Middlepark Road, The Oval, Ashenhurst Road and Kingswinford Road on weekdays.

Mittu the bilingual parrot went missing, his Black Country owners were distraught and searched far and wide for him. But tears turned to joy when the Urdu-speaking bird turned up four days later, four miles away.

Mittu has become part of the family since Ghaffar Ahmed, aged 36, took him into his home in Belmont Road, Lye, Stourbridge six months ago. As well as speaking some English, Mittu often screeches "Come here" or "Hello, how are you?" in Urdu, having learned it in Bradford.

Mr Ahmed, his wife, Shabana, 31, and their three young daughters were "devastated" when he disappeared. But Susan Lane, of Hillstone Avenue, Halesowen found the African Grey in her holly tree and tracked down Mr Ahmed online. "As soon as we were re-united he came and kissed my face," Mr Ahmed said.

**The flap's over now
lost parrot is found**



Ghaffar Ahmed reunited with Mittu the parrot who speaks both English and Urdu

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Drug grow pair sent to prison

TWO illegal immigrants who were "gardeners" for a cannabis farm containing £429,000 worth of plants which were growing inside a Halesowen industrial estate have been jailed.

When police officers raided the premises in Coombe Road they found 1,313 plants growing inside seven rooms. Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Mrs Sati Ruck, prosecuting, told the hearing last Wednesday that the plants were at various stages of growth. The potential yield from the crop was 48.5 kilos and Hung Le and Luong Vu were found hiding behind rubbish bins by police.

Le, aged 42, and Vu, 40, both Vietnamese-born and of no fixed address admitted producing cannabis. Judge Jonathan Gosling jailed Le for 28 months and Vu for 22.

Mrs Ruck said the pair had both entered the UK illegally.

Mr Jas Mann, defending Le, said he had been promised an income to send back to his family. Mr Harbinder Lally, defending mother-of-two Vu, said she had learned a hard lesson.

McDonald's loses out over plea on restaurant hours

A BID by McDonald's to extend the opening hours of a restaurant in Dudley has been turned down by planning chiefs. Bosses at Dudley Council refused the application for the Birmingham New Road branch after residents living nearby claimed it would be too noisy. The branch currently opens from 7am until 11pm.

Management originally applied to open the restaurant 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week but then revised the request to 5am until midnight daily. Families were still concerned about the move. A decision notice released by Dudley Council said the extra hours had the "potential to adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents".

The firm was "disappointed" by the decision.

Play area plan may bring families to beauty spot

A NEW ATTRACTION is set to be installed at a beauty spot near Stourbridge in a bid to bring in more families. National Trust bosses are starting preparatory work on a natural play area at Clent Hills to help keep youngsters entertained.

It is part of a range of measures being brought in at the site to encourage more families to visit the countryside haven.

Thousands of pounds has been poured into the development of the new play area which will include a sand pit, rope bridges and balance bars.

It is hoped the development will be ready to welcome its first youngsters by autumn this year.

The move comes after bosses installed baby changing facilities at the site and announced plans to host a regular programme of family events for the first time this summer.

Laura Broadhurst, community engagement officer for the National Trust at Clent Hills, said: "It is a place where people can get out and feel as though they are miles from anywhere.

"It is great for kids to explore," she added. "It's a really exciting time for us. We've invested a lot into developing our offer for families."

National Trust bosses have worked with children from local schools including Clent Primary School to draw up the plans for the play area, which will be behind the cafe at the Nimmings Wood entrance.

Xylophone

Other features it will boast include den making areas, an exploring area where children can look for bugs, a rope swing and natural xylophone.

Site bosses have also developed family explorer backpacks which people can hire out from the Rock Houses at nearby Kinver Edge, which is also run by the National Trust.

It is hoped this idea could also be implemented at the Clent Hills.

Trust chiefs are also hoping to make Kinver Edge more family friendly.

Activities planned at both sites over summer include Tai Chi, drumming workshops and forest foraging.

For more information about the summer holiday events programme, email laura.broadhurst@nationaltrust.org.uk

Handymen are up for grabs

A GROUP of men will be offering to help Black Country ladies out with handyman jobs — the women will bid for them in an "auction of boys".

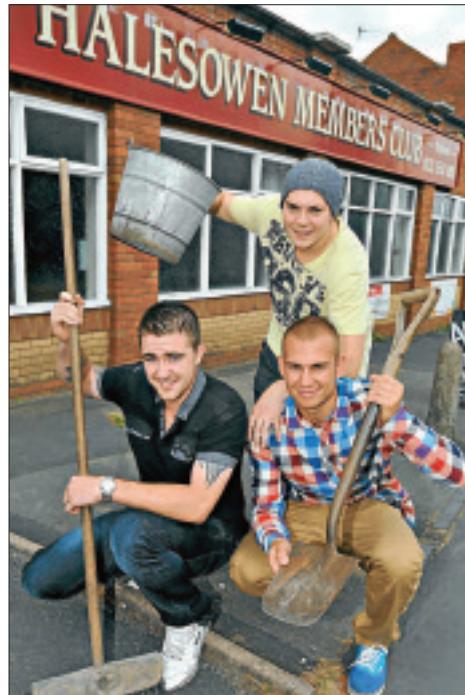
Halesowen women Aleisha Gerdes and Lucy Gadd, both aged 22, decided to organise the event, to be held on September 2, to raise money for Cancer Research.

They have recruited a total of eight young men, aged 17 to 25, to parade in front of an audience of up to 150 women, who can then bid for two to three hours of their time to help with such chores as gardening, driving or helping to carry their shopping.

The event will be held at Halesowen Members Club in Hagley Road, Halesowen.

"We'd seen auctions like this on America TV shows and thought it would be fun to organise," said Lucy. "Both of us have recently had members of our family affected by cancer."

There will also be entertainment by the Escape dance company. Details: Aleisha Gerdes on 07772 879744 or through Face-book.



Back, Ryan Baker, aged 17, gets ready for the auction along with Ian Jeffries, aged 22, left and Daniel Westbury, 24

Parking spaces may be reviewed

REVIEWSING the number of long and short-stay parking spaces available in Stourbridge town centre is one option being considered by council chiefs as they prepare for the closure of a multi-storey car park.

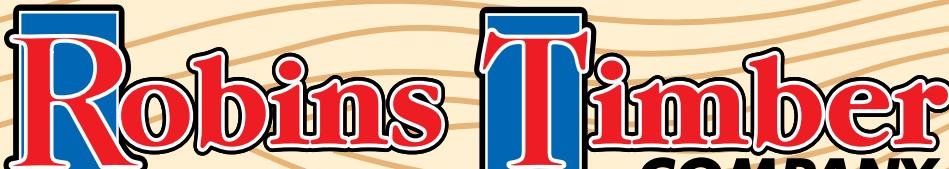
The 458-space Bell Street car park is to close later this year to make way for a £50million Crown Centre revamp, including a new Tesco. It is not thought any extra spaces will be created in the town centre.

However, council bosses are looking at the number of long and short-stay spaces, and whether to adjust the numbers. Councillor Patrick Harley, cabinet member for transportation, added: "Bell Street multi-storey is currently used by some short-stay and long-stay visitors.

Alternatives will include other car parks around the town, including the Rye Market multi-storey car park, which is only 200 metres from the leisure centre and will go a long way to meeting demand.

In addition to the Rye Market multi-storey, Stourbridge also has Church Street and Birmingham Street car parks, as well as short stay on-street car parking throughout the town centre.

Plans are also in the pipeline for a new car park under the Crown Centre as part of the redevelopment of the site. It is hoped work will start on the new Tesco in January and that it will be open by Christmas 2012.



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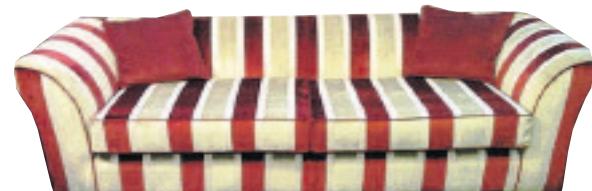
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Harry MacRae, aged five, with the huge 23lb carp he caught at Shatterford Lakes, Kidderminster

Birthday boy age five stuns anglers by landing this massive 23lb carp

LITTLE Harry MacRae is celebrating his catch of the day after netting a huge 23lb carp near Kidderminster.

The five-year-old of Kingswinford landed the fish on a birthday fishing trip with his father Paul to Shatterford Lakes. He had already hooked in five bream and seven other carp in smaller pools – but wanted to aim for a bigger prize.

Harry, who has been fishing for 18 months, begged his father to let him try his luck in the Masters Pool – where the experienced anglers show off their skills.

And within an hour, the 23lb carp

had started to bite, and little Harry was struggling to drag it out.

Paul, 33, of Mayflower Drive, said: "I was gobsmacked when I saw him pull it out. I gave him a hand because it was so heavy but he did all the hard work himself. He'd had such a successful day that his arms were already really tired but he was so happy. He absolutely loves fishing."

Fitter

Harry, a pupil at Kingswinford's Blandford Mere Primary, also caught a personal best 19lb grass carp – and his next ambition is to land a catfish.

Paul, who works as an astro turf fitter, has been angling throughout

Europe, and netted a 46lb carp three years ago in the Dordives, France.

Shatterford Lakes spokesman Daven Percival said: "Harry was a 'class act', adding: "We have a lot of children come down during the school holidays."

"Many of them had been here days on end. Harry comes down, and in one day absolutely aces it. I cannot tell you how rare it is for a child of his age to have a catch like this."

Harry spends most Sunday afternoons at Shatterford Lakes with his father and has his own rod and reel.

His eight-year-old sister Rachel is more interested in dance classes, but sometimes helps him out.

Residents win fight on bungalow plans

MORE THAN 250 residents have won their battle to stop a bungalow being built in the back garden of a neighbouring Black Country home.

They have fought twice before to stop the application for the four bedroom house in the grounds of a bungalow, in Redlake Drive, Pedmore, Stourbridge.

Visit is due on flats proposal

PLANS to convert a listed Victorian building in the grounds of a former Blank Country hospital into flats will be scrutinised during a site visit by councillors.

Multi-million pound flats are well under way. The development is taking shape on the site of the landmark former Wordsley Hospital. Six flats would be created in the old Guardians building within the site, off Stream Road, under plans produced by developer Shropshire Homes.

The one bedroom flats would each have a single parking space. Numerous revisions have been made to the housing plans since permission was first granted in 2007.

These have prompted concerns from residents and ward councillors.

The residents have expressed concern about the loss of trees on the site.

Two planning applications have previously been turned down by Dudley Council.

However, the decisions were both subsequently upheld by Government planning inspectors on appeal.

Residents formed the Redlake Action Group to oppose the plans, collecting a 260-strong petition and

writing 35 objection letters to the authority.

Members of Dudley Council's development control committee refused the application at a recent planning meeting.

After the meeting, company director and resident Alan Dunnaker said: "We are so pleased this application has been rejected and we just hope that this will be the last time."

"There was such a strong level of support against it."

Residents' concerns centred on the possible loss of trees on the site.

They included four birches already earmarked by applicant Gavin Warr of Selbourne Homes.

Objectors also claimed a garage as part of the plans would be too small, meaning cars could end up parked on the roadway.

Bright

But Mr Warr said the company had worked hard to protect the long-term health of the trees to create a "bright and airy feeling" in the area.

As part of the plans, space for three cars on the drive had been created, added Mr Warr.

Hunt now on for owner of dog



Kennel assistant Kate Hurley with the Jack Russell which was found in Wollaston

AN APPEAL has been launched to try to trace the owner of a dog found wandering on a Black Country street.

Staff at AK Duncan Veterinary Surgery in Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston, say the brown and white Jack Russell cross was brought into them at the end of last week by

a member of the public. The dog had been found by the shops in Wollaston and appeared to be without an owner or with any sign of ownership. His was microchipped but details were out of date.

Anyone who recognises the dog can contact the vets on 01384 393318.

Dragon winner's honour

A DUDLEY-BORN entrepreneur who quit his day job after wowing tycoons on television's Dragons' Den has scooped a business honour.

Neil Westwood's Magic Whiteboard won him the Small Business of the Year award at the Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce Awards.

Last year his creation had the TV show's millionaires scrambling to part with their cash.

Theo Paphitis and Deborah Meaden took a £100,000 stake.

The creation is a reusable sheet which can be stuck to any hard surface to form a whiteboard.

Stationery chain Staples stocks the whiteboard in all its 137 stores in the United Kingdom.

Sales have soared towards the £1million mark.

Mr Westwood, aged 38, said: "It's so exciting to win again."

"We now go forward to the national final in London," he added.

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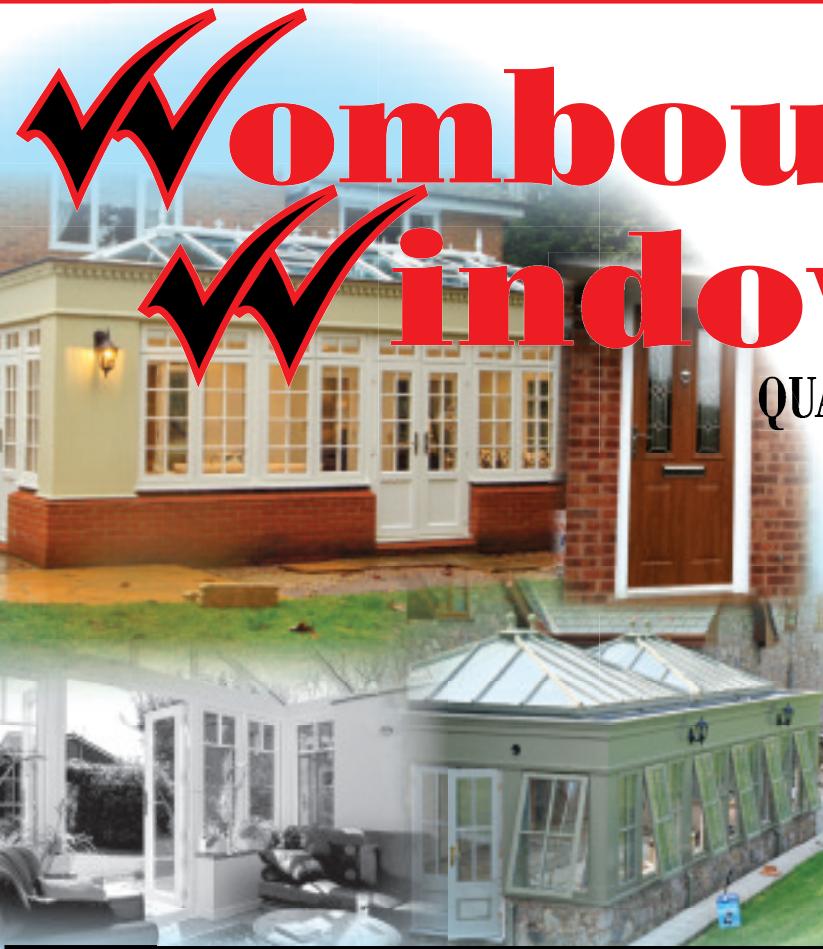
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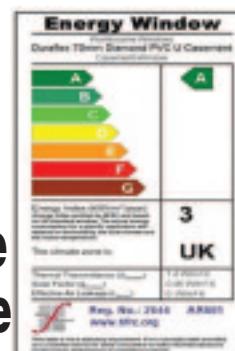
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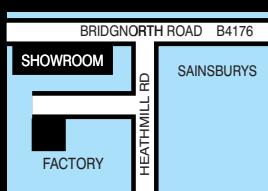
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Schools' £2.5m bill for staff

SCHOOLS in Dudley have spent more than £2.5million recruiting and paying supply teachers and temporary staff during the past 12 months, new figures reveal.

Casual workers were used to cover sickness absences and maternity leave. Some of the borough's 90 schools also employed agency staff to help with exams and recruitment.

The money paid out during the 2010/11 financial year also covered the cost of staff brought in to supervise exams as well as sports coaching and stationery supplies.

Dudley's seven special schools spent £284,266 while the borough's 63 primary schools laid out £1,506,592. The bill at the 20 secondary schools came to £1,165,985.

The figures were released by education bosses at Dudley Council under the Freedom of Information Act.

Individual schools are responsible for making their own staffing arrangements.

Play time in the Black Country



Lindsey and Richards Hobbs, seen with their two-year-old daughter, Mia

MORE THAN 1,500 youngsters in the Black Country have been enjoying a series of free play days.

Activities including a climbing wall, parachute games, sumo fun sessions, team games and nature activities have been taking place at five parks, including Mary

Stevens Park, Stourbridge. Children have also been able to have a go at den building, arts and crafts and storytelling.

Keepers from Dudley Zoo took creatures, including snakes, to Netherton Park. The activities have been based at Dudley's five healthy hubs.

Four-way funding bid

THE Black Country is joining forces with three other areas of England to try to win a share of a £1.4billion fund to boost the economy.

Four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across England have joined forces in a bid to secure Regional Growth Fund (RGF) finance.

The Black Country LEP is formed of council leaders from Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall as well as a group of prominent businessmen.

It was set up to replace £300million a year quango Advantage West Midlands to champion investment but has no budget of its own.

The Black Country is joining forces with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Liverpool and City Region, Coventry and Warwickshire LEPs.

Bosses said they did not want to use geography as a barrier to funding.

The LEPs will be working particularly to get funding for advanced engineering and manufacturing, with focus on the automotive and aerospace sectors.

In April the Black Country failed to secure a share of the RGF for projects ranging from cash to boost visitor numbers at Dudley Zoo, the Black Country Museum and the region's canal network, to plans proposing to redevelop Darlaston.

A bid has been submitted for another £49m from round two but the LEP is refusing to reveal what the projects would be until it knows if it has been successful.

Stewart Towe, chairman of the Black Country LEP, said "We are always supportive of initiatives that encourage and support private sector-led economic growth in the Black Country and as such were delighted to be part of a cross LEP RGF bid."

"The financial support that we can potentially offer will encourage business innovation."

The cross-border LEPs are expecting to hear if their bid has been successful in September.



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Plea for help as toy library loses funding

A CHARITY which provides toys for children has launched an appeal for volunteers after vital funding totalling more than £20,000 was axed.

The Phoenix Toy Library received a £23,000 grant covering the cost of a play advisor working 15 hours a week but this has now been withdrawn by Dudley Council which scrapped the funding as part of budget cuts.

New outdoor fitness class

A SERIES of outdoor fitness classes designed to make exercise more fun will be held in Kinver over the summer.

A range of cardiovascular and toning exercises will be included in the sessions, using natural parkland and benches.

They will be held every Friday between 9.30am and 10.30am at Brockley's Walk parkland.

Mums are encouraged to attend, with pushchairs welcome. For information call Tarn on 01384 872623.

The charity, which has a small team of volunteers, provides specialist toys for children and teenagers with special needs. It also helps disadvantaged youngsters.

The organisation takes its van of toys to visit around 42 families every month, as well as run sessions at Pens Meadow School in Brierley Hill and the Phoenix Centre in Stourbridge.

Chairman Barbara French said the charity, which relies on donations, had been forced to scale back its rounds.

Mrs French said: "It is a great pity that the most disadvantaged people are the ones being hit by these cuts."

Level

"We desperately need new volunteers to help us to continue to provide the service at the same level. It would be wonderful to hear from anyone who could give a few hours a month."

Councillor Liz Walker, cabinet member for children's services, said budget pressures were to blame.

"In order to protect essential services in the children's services directorate and make the necessary savings in the budget for 2011/12, the council took the decision to withdraw funding from the Phoenix toy library this year," she said.

To help, email phoenix-toylibrary@hotmail.com

Art goes on show



Artist David Foster, 72, with some of the works

Watercolours and oils displayed in church

MEMBERS of the Black Country Artists group will be exhibiting their works until the end of this week.

Watercolours and oil paintings are among the works on display at Hurst Green Methodist Church Hall in Narrow Lane, Halesowen, until Saturday from 10.30am-5.30pm. Entry is free.

The group formed almost two decades ago and has around 24 members.

One of the original members, David Foster, aged 72, from Thorne Crescent in Rowley Regis, said the works were in varying media. "There will be still life drawings, country life pictures, birds and other animals, landscapes and seascapes by various artists," he added.

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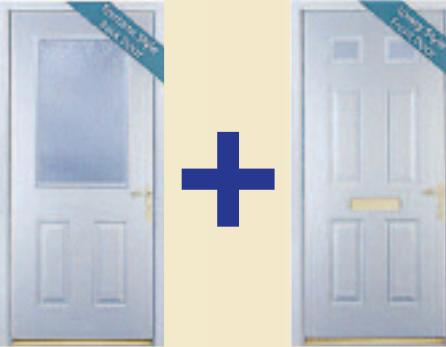
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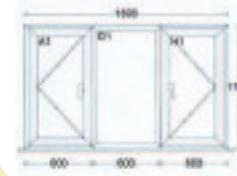
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Probe on care home treatment

DETECTIVES are probing allegations that elderly residents at a Stourbridge retirement home were mistreated.

Police were called in after concerns were raised in an inspection at Westfield Lodge, by the Care Quality Commission.

The owner of Westfield Lodge, on July 6, gave 28 days' notice to the authorities that he was voluntarily closing the home and the 18 residents have now all moved to other care homes.

West Midlands Police spokesman Lee Page said: "Detectives from the Public Protection Unit in Halesowen are looking at a number of allegations relating to Westfield Lodge Care Home on Norton Road in Stourbridge to establish whether any offences have been committed."

"This forms part of a joint investigation by police and the local authority after concerns were raised about mistreatment of residents."

"Inquiries are currently ongoing and we cannot comment further."

Nobody was available for comment at Westfield Lodge.

Trial over bag theft

A WOMAN will face trial after she denied stealing a nurse's handbag from a Black Country hospital.

Janet Rollinson, aged 47, is accused of taking the bag at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

Rollinson, of Pleasant View, Lower Gornal, pleaded not guilty to burglary at Dudley Magistrates Court on August 1. Her case will be heard at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

No encore with JB's set to go under the hammer

FORTY-TWO YEARS after JB's first opened its doors as a place for live music in Dudley, it is now set to be wiped from the map for good when it is auctioned off next month.

The club will be stripped of its memorabilia and auctioned off as administrators admit defeat in the battle to sell it on.

Former owner Sam Jukes, who co-founded the club in 1969 in what he calls a "ratty little bike shed", has spoken of his heartbreak at seeing his life's work dissolve.

The live music venue and nightclub in Castle Hill will go under the hammer as an empty building in September as no buyer materialised willing to take it on.

"It is devastating really. You start these things off and it was tiny, hardly anything," said Mr Jukes, aged 64.

"Then it got bigger and bigger and then it was massive – but then the recession hit and it kills you. It's such a shame that nobody wants to take it on as it's a brilliant venue and the recession won't last forever."

The music club was first launched at a 250-capacity venue in King Street, Dudley, by Mr Jukes alongside Sid and John Weston and John Bryant. It moved to its current home in Castle Hill – which can fit in 950 – in 1994.

Robert Plant, Dire Straits, The Police, U2 and Manic Street Preachers are all acts which cut their musical teeth playing the legendary stage.

But despite its rock-star-studded past, JB's struggled during the recession. A particularly harsh winter last year followed by a festival-heavy summer contributed to poor numbers on the door and the bills began piling in.

Then Mr Jukes suffered two strokes. He and wife Sue decided to call in the administrators – though he is finding retirement difficult.

"For over 40 years it was all about rock and roll, seven days and seven nights a week. It's a big shock to the system."

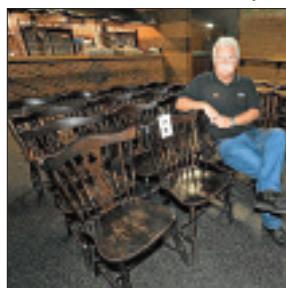
Sting of The Police



Robert Plant played at JB's



Former owner Sam Jukes and joint founder Sid Weston by the mixing desk and lighting desk being sold



Some of the JB's chairs being sold off



Even the bar tills will be up for grabs at the JB's auction

Revenge father is jailed

A MAN has been jailed after attacking a teenager and a woman with a baseball bat after "taking the law into his own hands" when his daughter returned home upset.

Richard Marsh, aged 42, went out in his van to find those responsible and confront them, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

He saw "the red mist", hitting the 17-year-old male, who cannot be named, on the shoulder. He also struck a woman, Sarah Blakemore, who was with the teenager.

Marsh, of Quarry Bank High Street, had admitted common assault and grievous bodily harm and two months for the assault, to be served consecutively.

The court heard the incident, in Quarry Bank High Street on October 25, had been "totally out of character" for Marsh, a dedicated and loving family man and community worker.

Mr Gurdeep Garcha, defending, said his client was genuinely remorseful.

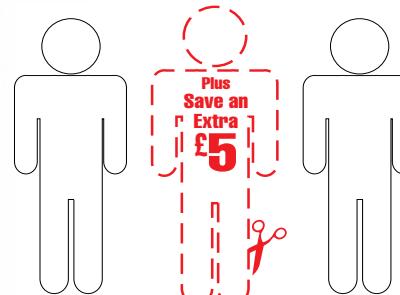
Police meet community

MEMBERS of the public will have their say on neighbourhood issues in Dudley at a meeting this month.

Officers from the neighbourhood team in St James's are joining the Milking Bank and London Heights Neighbourhood Watch meeting to discuss issues of concern.

The meeting will be held at Dudley Christian Fellowship Church on Salter Street on August 18 at 7pm.

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**Driver left
brake off
his van**

A DRINK driver who left his van without its handbrake on – forcing a pair of police officers to push it up a hill – has been banned from the wheel for two years.

The vehicle began to roll down the road when he visited a store for cigarettes, Dudley Magistrates' Court heard on August 1.

Carpenter David Taylor, aged 56, was nearly three times the limit when he parked outside the shop in Park Road, Dudley.

One officer held the van while the other ran inside to fetch Taylor to open it and put on the handbrake.

They could smell alcohol so tested him, which showed he had 104 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath. The limit is 35mg.

Mr David Wilkins, defending, said Taylor had lost count of how much he had drunk during the afternoon.

Taylor, of King Street, Brierley Hill, admitted quitting a motor vehicle and driving with excess alcohol.

He was banned for two years and told to pay £85 costs and carry out 120 hours of unpaid work.

Waste dumpers conned their would-be worker

TWO FLY-TIPPERS dumped 30 tons of asbestos in the Himley countryside – and left would-be employee to carry the can when they were spotted, a court heard.

The low-loader used was in the name of 20-year-old Oliver Franklin from Dudley, who signed as the registered owner on the promise of a driver's job which never materialised.

Franklin, cleared of dumping the waste, told the court he believed the pair when they said the vehicle had to be registered to him for him to drive it.

Ali Tabari, prosecuting on behalf of South Staffordshire Council, said dog-walker Cyril Heathcock saw a wagon loaded with rubbish, topped with a mattress, parked on a bridle path in Himley as he took a stroll on May 13 last year.

When he returned a few minutes later, he saw the tipper offloading the pile onto the path where it had been joined by a skip lorry, Cannock Magistrates' Court heard.

Mr Heathcock memorised the registration plate, and contacted the council. Officers found the padlock on the gate had been cut and two piles of rubbish dumped, one a 30-ton mound of hazardous asbestos and the other 40 tons of mixed builders' waste.

But Mark Sheppard, defending, told Cannock magistrates that the only time Franklin saw the low-loader was when he drove the two men he believed would employ him to buy it.

He did not pay for the vehicle and was not present when it off-loaded the waste, he said. He had been laid off and was looking for work. Mr Sheppard said that Franklin, of Kent Street, Gornal, who pleaded not guilty to the charge, had never been in trouble before and had been taken in.

He was cleared by magistrates who said he was "not in a position to exercise control over the vehicle" at the time of the offence.



Asbestos dumped at Himley

Police advise residents how to avoid becoming victims

POLICE have been out and about in Dudley as part of a drive to prevent people from becoming victims of crime.

Pc Angie Hodgetts joined the St Thomas's neighbourhood team to spend a day offering crime prevention advice to local residents living around the Iris Close area in Kates Hill.

PCSOs Joanne King and Rachael Grainger joined Pc Hodgetts to mark household valuables, such as DVDs and televisions.

The white watch crew from Dudley fire station also attended the safety day.

They checked smoke detectors and gave fire safety advice.

Clearly a sign of poor spelling



Barbara Vale, and John Oakley, 28, are bemused by the latest sign on the road

IT'S AS clair as mud, isn't it? Road workers painting a new sign on a Kingswinford road have left motorists and residents chuckling.

The vowels have been jumbled, leaving the instruction "Keep Claer" in large white letters on the road surface in Oak Street at the junction with a foot and cycle path.

And it has got folk a-twitter – with online tweets directing followers to look at a picture of the misspelled sign posted by Al Jackson on a photograph

sharing website. Barbara Vale, aged 69, who lives in Oak Street, said: "The sign's been down a week or two now. But I've only just noticed that it's spelled wrongly. I did have a chuckle about it."

Dudley Councillor Patrick Harley, cabinet member for transportation, said: "We have been made aware that our contractor has spelt the word 'clear' incorrectly. The mistake will be corrected as soon as possible by the private contracting company."

**Pupils
making
grade
at Sats**

PUPILS in Dudley borough left primary school this summer with a good grasp of English, reading, writing and maths, new Sats figures show.

In English, 82 per cent of 11-year-olds achieved Level 4, the standard expected.

Sats figures show that this is above the 81 per cent national average and a two per cent increase on its 2009 results.

A total of 77 per cent reached the expected level in writing – again, higher than the average attained by pupils across England.

Some 78 per cent hit the standard in maths – matching that of the area's 2009 results, but two percentage points lower than the national average.

And some 84 per cent of youngsters achieved Level 4 in reading – matching the national average.

Hard

Councillor Liz Walker, cabinet member for children's services, said: "We have more children reaching the national expectation than we have previously."

"These figures reflect just how hard our pupils and schools work and I'd like to congratulate them all."

In 2010, not all Dudley primary schools conducted national tests due to industrial action so comparisons with 12 months ago are not possible.

Nationally, the number of pupils reaching the expected level in all three subjects of maths, reading and writing was 67 per cent.

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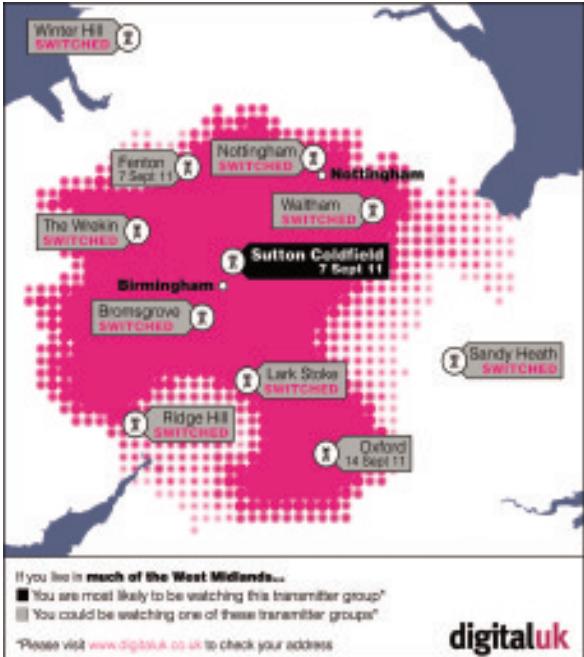


Products subject to availability. *Free fitting applies when you buy the equivalent size of one Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum or Ruby underlays. Price fitting offer does not apply to laminate/wood or vinyl flooring. Stock varies by store to store. Colours in pictures may vary slightly due to print quality. United Carpets accept no responsibility for printing errors. Terms & Conditions apply. **Photographs are for illustration purposes only. Accessories & in-store underlays where applicable are not included in the price unless stated. Mattresses are not included in the price of the bedframe. ***T&Cs apply. Conditions of the statement of "If we can't fit you a better, also-fit-for-use, within four carpet days, we'll give you the carpet, underlay & fix for free." To qualify for this offer, you must provide a written quotation for exactly the same carpet, underlay, pricker, door bars and fitting from another supplier, as you are requesting from United Carpets and Beds, and produce a copy of the carpet and underlay quotation. Any quotation produced by United Carpets and Beds or fitted by us will be deemed reasonable and genuine. If United Carpets and Beds, and customers from a local High Street carpet outlet, United Carpets and Beds, receive the right to take a reasonable amount of time investigating any question before honouring our statement, any quotation produced by United Carpets and Beds after the sale has been completed, afterwards will not be honoured.

With just weeks to go until the first analogue TV signals are switched off in the West Midlands, the **Chronicle** has teamed up with Digital UK to provide readers with this special guide to digital TV switchover.



Digital UK



So, how will these changes happen?

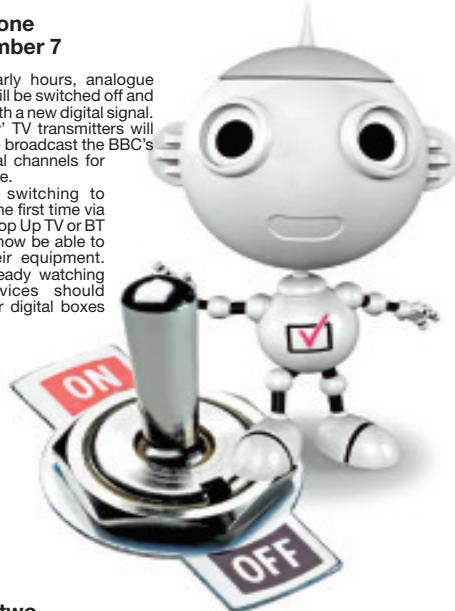
Switchover will happen in two stages. If you currently receive your TV signal through an aerial, in either analogue or digital format (Freeview, Top Up TV, BT Vision), you are probably served by the Sutton Coldfield transmitter group, which switches on the dates below.

Televisions connected to a cable or satellite service are not affected.

Stage one September 7

In the early hours, analogue BBC Two will be switched off and replaced with a new digital signal. Local 'relay' TV transmitters will also start to broadcast the BBC's other digital channels for the first time.

Readers switching to digital for the first time via Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision will now be able to set up their equipment. Homes already watching these services should retune their digital boxes or IDTVs.



Stage two September 21

All remaining analogue channels will be switched off and replaced with additional digital services.

Everyone watching Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision will need to retune their equipment again to receive all available channels.

On both dates, these changes will happen overnight. For most viewers, services will be restored by the morning.

Households receiving their TV signal from local relay transmitters will receive new digital services later in the day and should tune in for the first time or retune from this point.

What is switchover and when will it all be taking place?



Digital TV switchover is the biggest change in television since the introduction of colour. Analogue signals are about to be switched off and replaced with new digital services.

This will make Freeview available to thousands of homes watching local 'relay'

transmitters in many areas. Digital UK is the independent organisation set up by the broadcasters to lead the switchover.

Preparing

It provides an advice line and website to help with general questions about getting digital TV and preparing for the switchover.

Peter Monteith, Digital UK's regional manager

for the Central TV region, says: "Switchover will change forever how television is broadcast."

"I'm delighted that, very soon, viewers who have previously been unable to get Freeview services will be able to do so for the first time."

"Most people are well prepared – but for those who still have questions, we are here to help."

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How do I re-tune my TV set?



VIEWERS watching Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision will need a full retune of their equipment at both stages of switchover in order to continue receiving services.

You should retune from time to time in order to keep your Freeview box up to date. Sometimes channels move around – so if you should lose access to several channels, try retuning.

For a full retune your Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision equipment, follow these steps (these instructions are a guide only – each product works slightly differently).

- Switch on your digital box or digital TV
- Press 'menu' on the remote control
- Select 'set up' or 'installation' option
- Select 'first time installation' option (sometimes called 'factory reset', 'full retune' or 'default settings')
- Press 'OK' if your equipment asks if you want to delete all your channels – don't worry this is totally normal

- All channels will be automatically installed. This may take a few minutes, and your equipment may shut down and restart.

After a retune, if you are not receiving your preferred regional service, you are likely to find your preferred services further down the channel list. If you want to make your preferred services easier to find, you can either use the 'favourites' list or 'channel settings'. See your instruction manual for more details.

If you find you are missing some channels or your equipment has stopped working, visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning for more information. If you can't fix it yourself, you might want to consult friends or family who could do it for you, or otherwise call out an installer (see 'Common questions').

To watch a short video showing you how to retune, and for specific re-tuning instructions for the most popular Freeview products, visit digitaluk.co.uk/retuning.



Some people are eligible for the Switchover Help Scheme, making the change easy for elderly and disabled with practical help

Help is on hand for those in need



THOUSANDS of people in the Central TV region have already taken up help from the Switchover Help Scheme.

Run by the BBC under an agreement with the Government, it's an official scheme which makes switchover easy for older and disabled people by giving practical help to switch one TV in their home.

People are eligible for the help scheme if they are:

- Aged 75 years or over;

- Eligible for attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement, or disability living allowance;

- Registered blind or partially sighted;

- Or have been living in a care home for six months or more.

If you're eligible, you will be offered equipment that's easy to use, delivery or installation and a demonstration of how to use it, together with a choice of options.

Your aerial will be checked and upgraded where it can be, if it's needed. There is a freephone number to call for help while you get used to things.

Most people will be asked to pay £40 towards the standard offer of help. For eligible people on income-related benefits, it's free. Eligible people can also choose from a range of other help scheme options.

If you know an older or disabled person who might still need help to switch to digital TV, you could lend a helping hand and give them

the message about the switchover help scheme. Even if they have digital TV already, they can get help to switch another TV set in their home.

All you need to do is respond to the information pack which has been sent to every eligible person's home. But you must respond to get the help. The help scheme will close for applications in the Central TV region on October 28, 2011.

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Will your TV be affected by the digital switchover in September?

If you're not sure and are confused by all the there's absolutely no obligation to buy anything. Options available why not call LKB Aerials? The family run business has many years of experience in fitting, repairing and installing all kinds of aerials as well as Freesat and satellite dishes. As the area moves towards digital TV reception, Ashley Barnett provides a FREE ADVICE SERVICE that can help you understand what's happening.

To avoid losing your TV service, Ashley's advice is to act now. "When the existing analogue signal is switched off, viewers will need to convert or upgrade their TV equipment to receive the new digital signals. This can be done through the aerials, by satellite, cable or by broadband".

LKB Aerials holds full public liability insurance and all work is fully guaranteed.

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expressandstar.com/entertainment

Switchover: Common questions answered

Understandably, some TV viewers will have a number of questions regarding these changes being made to their programme reception.

Below is a list of some of the more frequently asked questions, complete with answers.

Where can I get face-to-face advice on switchover?

Digital UK has been working closely with charities to organise local advice points during switchover. These will be staffed by trained volunteers and are open to everyone. There are also Digital UK roadshows in the region. To find out where your local advice point or roadshow will be, visit digitaluk.co.uk/centralevents or call 08456 50 50 50.

What about my video recorder?

After switchover, video and analogue DVD recorders will still play back and record, but you won't be able to record one channel while you watch another. If you want to continue doing this after switchover, the simplest way is to get a digital TV recorder. These also allow you to record a whole series at the touch of a button, and pause and rewind live TV.

Will I need a new aerial to receive Freeview?

Most rooftop aerials will be fine after switchover but a small proportion of aerials are likely to need replacing to receive Freeview. Digital UK recommends that you wait until after switchover to see if your aerial needs replacing in order to avoid having unnecessary work carried out. You can check whether your existing aerial is likely to be suitable for receiving digital by visiting the aerial test page on teletext page 284.



Preparing your television for the imminent digital switchover isn't nearly as daunting as it seems

Where can I find a good aerial installer?

Look for a Registered Digital Installer (RDI) with the 'digital tick' logo. Go to rdi-lb.tv or call Digital UK on 0845 650 50 50 for more information. If you can't find an RDI locally, look for someone with Associate RDI or CAI Plus status – or ask your local electrical retailer.

What channels will I get?

Which channels you receive will depend on which transmitter you receive. Viewers served by a local 'relay' transmitter will receive around 15 Freeview channels for the first time. These will include BBC One, BBC Two, ITV 1, Channel 4 and Five, plus all the

other channels from the BBC (those funded by the licence fee) and some other services from public-service broadcasters.

Viewers served by a larger 'main' transmitter will receive these channels as well as some extra services from commercial broadcasters.

These extra channels are also available via satellite.

You can check which channels are available in your area by using the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk, or by calling 08456 50 50 50.

This also gives you information about satellite and cable options in your area.



Whichever method you choose, going digital is a must to keep watching your TV

There's more than one way to keep you in the picture

If you only receive five or fewer analogue channels through an aerial on any of your sets, you'll need to think about converting them for switchover – otherwise you risk being faced with a blank screen once analogue signals are switched off.

There are three main ways to go digital:

- Convert your existing analogue TV using a digital box (e.g. Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision)

- Buy a new TV with digital (Freeview or freesat) built in

- Have a digital TV service, such as satellite or cable TV, installed for you. Providers include Sky, freesat and Virgin Media

Remember, almost everyone will be able to watch Freeview after switchover – even homes currently out of coverage.

You can check the options for going digital in your area, and what channels will be available through your aerial, using the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk

Extra channels are available through other digital TV services, such as satellite or cable.

Virtually any TV set, including black and white ones and those without Scart sockets, can be converted using a digital box.

With Freeview HD, the best things in life are free.

How can I get all the best TV subscription free?

Freeview HD is packed with popular shows across four HD channels available with: BBC One HD, ITV1 HD, Channel 4 HD and BBC HD. Highlights include the return of Wimbledon, Popstar to Operastar and Desperate Housewives. And don't forget you still get up to 50 standard definition channels including ITV2, E4, More4, BBC Three and 5*. Plenty to keep the whole family entertained over the summer holidays.

Delivering up to five times better picture quality and incredible sound, Freeview HD offers the ultimate viewing experience this summer, providing every detail in crisp, clear high definition.

What else does Freeview offer?

Even if you're out and about enjoying the summer weather, you can record and store your favourite programmes using a Freeview+ HD recorder, ready to watch when you want (when the summer rain comes!)

Press one button and record the whole of your favourite series. Watch one show whilst recording another. Or even pause and rewind live TV to watch that amazing moment again. All in HD. And all for free.

You can now get BBC iPlayer on selected Freeview HD TVs and boxes. Once you have connected your TV or box to the internet, you can access BBC iPlayer and, depending on your product, a variety of other online services including YouTube, Facebook

and online film rental services such as Lovefilm.

For more information on all the great benefits of Freeview, visit freeview.co.uk

What do I need?

Keep an eye out for the Freeview HD logo in retail stores and online, and if you haven't already make sure you've got an HD Ready TV. You should also check you are in the right area to receive high definition TV from Freeview by entering your postcode into the coverage checker on the website freeview.co.uk/availability

Freeview HD boxes are available from just £50, Freeview+ HD boxes start from £150 and TVs with Freeview HD built in start from as little as £300.

Win a Freeview +HD box



Freeview is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a top of the range Sony SRV HDT500 Freeview+ HD box

To be in with a chance of winning simply send an email with the subject heading 'Central' and your full name to online@freeview.co.uk

Terms & Conditions:

Competition closes 12 noon on 16th Sept 2011 and entries received after that date will be invalid. Entry is open only to residents of the United Kingdom aged 18 and over. Full terms & conditions available at freeview.co.uk/dso/terms

The Freeview service is subject to coverage. An aerial upgrade may be required. The FREEVIEW, FREEVIEW+, FREEVIEW HD and FREEVIEW+ HD are trademarks of DTV Services LTD. ©DTV Services Ltd 2011. The channel logos are trademarks and copyright of the respective owners. The BBC One HD logo is a trademark of the British Broadcasting Corporation and issued under licence.



Torchwood, Thursdays 9pm on BBC One & BBC One HD



Red or Black, Saturdays nights on ITV1 & ITV1 HD



Jo Frost: Extreme Parental Guidance, Wednesdays 8pm on Channel 4 & Channel 4 HD

Dear reader,

There are now just a few weeks to go before most homes in the West Midlands start their switch to digital TV on **7 September**.

For anyone who has Freeview services* or an old analogue TV there are two important stages to remember:

7 September – Switchover stage one:

The switchover begins. Analogue BBC Two will be switched off permanently and the higher powered BBC digital services will launch. All Freeview TVs and boxes will need to be re-tuned on or after this date.

21 September – Switchover stage two:

The remaining analogue channels will be switched off and the rest of the digital services launched. All Freeview TVs and boxes will need to be re-tuned again.

Your switchover dates depend on where you live. To check your dates, enter your postcode at [digitaluk.co.uk /postcodechecker](http://digitaluk.co.uk/postcodechecker) or call 08456 50 50 50. Switchover makes Freeview available to virtually every home, including those that can't currently receive it, as it allows the digital signal to be strengthened and transmitted for the first time from the local relay transmitters.

Most homes will be able to receive more than 40 channels and some will receive around 15. It will also provide additional services such as audio description for viewers with disabilities. Homes who have satellite or cable on all their TV sets will not need to do anything.

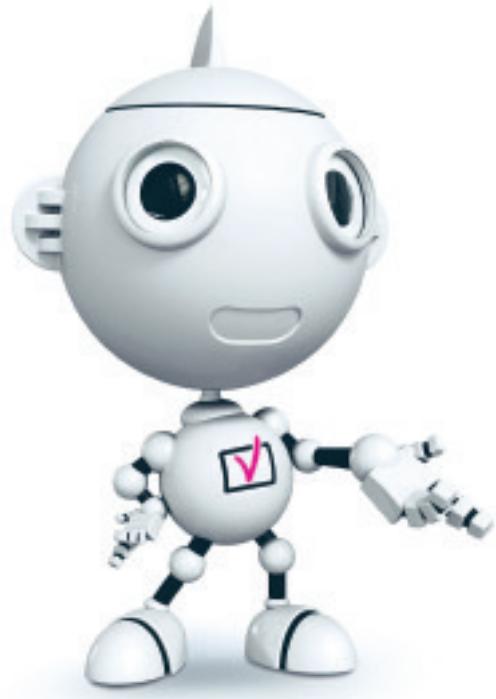
If you have questions go to digitaluk.co.uk or call 08456 50 50 50.

Thank you,



Peter Monteith
Regional Manager, Anglia and Central
Digital UK

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- Dunster & Minehead

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Brighton - Royal Albion Hotel

The Regency resort of Brighton has a unique atmosphere. There are a wide range of antique shops, selection of good restaurants and a lovely sea front. Don't miss the historic 'Lanes'. The Royal Albion Hotel sits directly opposite the pier.

Included excursions:

- Arundel & Worthing
- Lewes

4 Days • 3 Nights:
26 August from £159.95



Bath & Longleat

Georgian Bath has a great range of attractions including the Roman Baths, Bath Abbey and the Jane Austen Centre.

On day 2 we visit Longleat and include a journey through the renowned safari park. Afterwards you can view one of the most

2 Days • 1 Night:
27 August from £79.95



Eastbourne - Mansion Lions Hotel

Eastbourne offers spectacular coastal scenery and countryside. The top class Mansion Hotel is on the sea front overlooking Grand Parade.

Included excursions:

- Battle and the Cinque port of Rye - with its enchanting cobbled streets & Mediaeval church
- Brighton

5 Days • 4 Nights:
29 August from £299.95,
17 October from £279.95



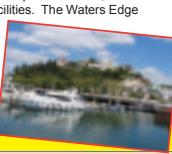
Torquay - Waters Edge Hotel

The popular resort of Torquay has a superb coastline, attractive harbour and a wide selection of facilities. The Waters Edge Hotel is set back from Livermead Beach and has one of the finest locations in Tor Bay.

Included excursions:

- South Hams and Salcombe
- Plymouth

5 Days • 4 Nights:
29 August from £169.95



Kentish Rover - Bridgewood Manor Hotel

Enjoy the sweeping sandy beaches, long promenades and host of traditional seaside attractions. The Bridgewood Manor Hotel is designed around a wonderful inner courtyard and has an air of luxury.

Included excursions:

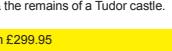
- North Kent coastline and touring the twin resorts of Whitstable and Herne Bay
- Visit to the southern coastlines of Kent
- Royal Tunbridge Wells

4 Days • 3 Nights: 30 September from £169.95

Weymouth - Carlton Hotel

Weymouth has a fabulous beach & a fascinating harbour as well as some narrow shopping streets & the remains of a Tudor castle. It is a great place for a holiday.

8 Days • 7 Nights: 20 August from £299.95



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22 Aug Warner Summer Special Norton Grange 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £239.95	29 Aug Eastbourne - top class Mansion Lions Hotel 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £299.95
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26 Aug 4* Belgium Break - Brussels, Ghent & Bruges - 3 Days • 2 Nights	from £99.95	29 Aug Paignton Hoppa' Break 5 Days • 4 Nights	from £159.95
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Included excursions:

- Transfer to central Paris. Optional guided morning excursion - £9.95 pp
- Visit to Versailles

3 Days • 2 Nights:
19 August, 16 Sept, 21 Oct from £129.95
11 November from £99.95



Ostend Free Bar Breaks

Ostend has it all - miles of sandy beaches, delightful promenades, sea front cafés and colourful markets. We stay for 3 nights on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis at the New Astoria Hotel. A 'free bar' with local draught beer, red or white wine or soft drinks between 20.30 hrs and midnight is included.

Optional excursions:

- Sluis & Bruges - £9.95 per person
 - Amsterdam - £19.95 per person
- Special Offer: Book both excursions for just £24 pp

4 Days • 3 Nights:
26 August & 21 October from £199.95

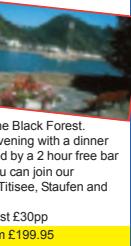


Rhine Valley & the Black Forest with special Black Forest Party Night including free bar

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Special Offer: Book both excursions for just £30pp

5 Days • 4 Nights: 05 Sept & 10 Oct from £199.95



Prague - city of 100 Spires 4* Hotel Duo

Prague boasts a stunning skyline with magnificent views over the River Vltava. There are Mediaeval cobbled streets, baroque facades, renaissance palaces and stunning churches. The 4* Hotel Duo has a great range of facilities including a bar, restaurant and sports centre. A metro station is just opposite the hotel entrance.

Included excursion:

Guided tour of Prague

Optional excursions:

- Visit to southern Bohemia and Cesky Krumlov - £19.95 pp
- Charles IV's magnificent country castle - Karlstejn Castle - £9.95 pp
- Northern Bohemia and Karlovy Vary - £19.95 pp

Special Offer: Book all 3 excursions for just £39.95 pp

8 Days • 7 Nights: 17 September from £299.95



Irish Delight - 4* Bettystown Court Hotel

Included excursions:

- Visit to historic Dublin. As well you can join our optional tour of the old Jameson distillery - £16 pp
- Visit to the quaint fishing village of Howth

5 Days • 4 Nights: 25 September from £199.95



Sorrento & the Amalfi Coast

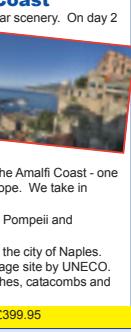
Admire some of Europe's most spectacular scenery. On day 2 we visit the Lake Garda area. On day 3 we travel through Tuscany to the Sorrento Peninsula area and stay for 5 nights at a 3* hotel on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. On day 4 you can join our optional visit to Capri, with included guided tour by mini bus - £59.95 pp

On day 5 we have included a tour along the Amalfi Coast - one of the most spectacular coastlines in Europe. We take in Amalfi and Ravello.

On day 6 you can join our optional visit to Pompeii and Vesuvius - £39.95 per person

On day 7 you can join our optional visit to the city of Naples. The city has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. See the narrow streets, mysterious churches, catacombs and caves - £19.95 per person.

10 Days • 9 Nights: 30 September from £399.95



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Budapest Christmas Market

4* Mercure Budapest, Buda

6 Days • 5 Nights - 08 December from £299.95

Black Forest, Switzerland & Alsace

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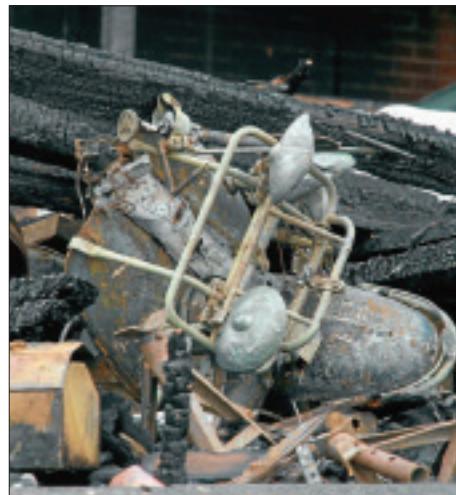
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Homes and gardens are devastated by fireball

A FIREBALL left a trail of devastation after arsonists set fire to land next to a row of houses in the Black Country.

Classic cars and gardens were destroyed during the blaze in St James's Avenue, Rowley Regis.

The grass fire quickly spread to



The remains of a classic Vespa scooter

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three properties with flames at least 20ft high damaging windows and guttering at the homes.

A vintage car collection, believed to include an E-Type Jaguar, an MG, a Triumph, a Vespa moped and classic motorbikes was destroyed.

As the blaze, which started at 6.30pm last Wednesday, hit one of the cars it erupted into a huge fireball, melting window frames and guttering.

The scene was left littered with remains of the vehicles, including burned-out engines and twisted metal, while melted guttering hung from two of the worst-hit homes.

The worst-affected property on St James's Avenue, which was closest to the open land and housed the classic cars, had three back windows boarded up the following day after glass had shattered, while large cracks were visible in a second home.

Grass was also left blackened and scorched where the fire had started and spread, while homes remained smoke-logged.

Resident Alison Wood, whose garden was destroyed, raised the alarm. Her property sits in the middle of the three homes affected.

Vintage

The 34-year-old NHS worker, who lives with partner Wayne Kelly, aged 35, and 11-year-old son Keelan Wood, said: "I could see smoke and thought someone was burning their rubbish or having a barbecue, but it was really thick smoke."

"I came down the road and the grass was all ablaze and I saw all our fence go up and into a big fireball."

"I moved my car quickly, but it got all of my neighbour's vintage cars. He has lost so much."

"It has literally wiped out all of our back gardens and our roofs."

Son Keelan, a pupil at St Michael's School in Curral Road, Rowley Regis, who suffers with asthma, was treated for smoke inhalation.

Ms Wood's partner Wayne said he thought the fire was a barbecue at first.

The council worker said: "I thought to myself, that's getting a bit big, then I suddenly realised what was happening and I raced down the bank and started to try

to put it out with my feet, stamping on it, but that did no good at all, it was useless."

Then we grabbed the hose and tried that but again that did no good.

"Within a matter of minutes it had reached the houses."

He added: "I thought the house was going to go. We tried to rescue the cars, but there was so much smoke and heat we just couldn't do it."

The firemen put it out really quickly and they saved our houses."

Washing

"The firemen said if it had been another five minutes the roofs of the houses would have caught fire."

Mr Kelly said he himself lost the hard top for his MG car which melted.

He also lost a push bike, all of his tools, three lawn-

mowers and all his garden fencing.

Decking, a garden shed, patio furniture and even washing hanging on the clothes line has also been destroyed. The least seriously affected property had damage to its garden fence.

Ms Wood added: "The scary thing is, if this had happened of a night time, I don't think we would have got out alive, it just spread that quickly."

"At the end of the day we are still here, that's the main thing. It could have been a lot worse."

Crews from Cradley Heath, Oldbury and Brierley Hill attended.

Cradley Heath crew commander Andy Pincher said: "They were very lucky, it might have been a different story if they had been older people."

Crews used a main jet, two hose reels and six breathing apparatus as they tackled the blaze.



Wayne Kelly amid the devastation



The extensive fire damage at numbers 24, 26 and 28 St James's Avenue

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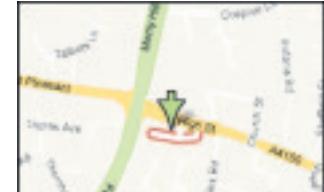
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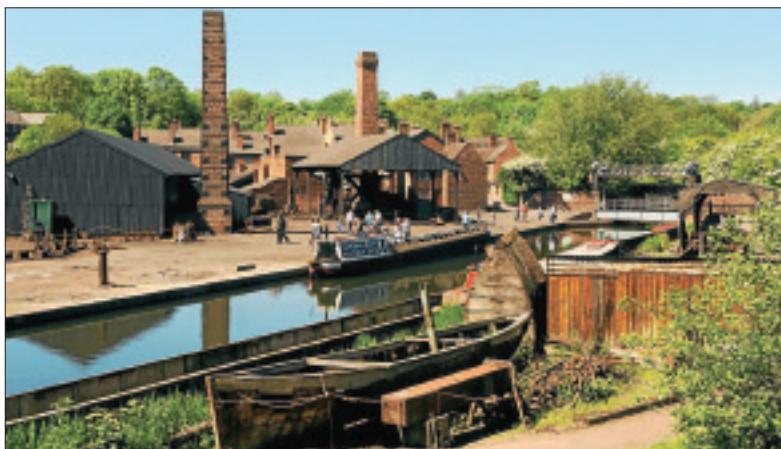
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One of the museum's most popular attractions is its canal trips. The surroundings are preserved in a time long ago



A great day out is yours to be had at the Black Country Living Museum, situated near Dudley Zoological Gardens

History comes to life at the living museum

During its 36-year history, the Black Country Living Museum has established itself as the region's number one venue for local history and culture.

The museum was established in 1975 and opened in 1978 and is held in trust for the benefit of the public.

It comprises notable buildings from across the four Black Country boroughs of Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Dudley, many of which were dismantled brick by brick before being rebuilt at the museum.

It has grown in size and scope, having assumed responsibility for collections made by Dudley Museum and Art Gallery and having taken over the buildings and

collections of the Lock Museum, in Willenhall, in 2003. The museum covers 26 acres and comprises rebuilt historic buildings in the shadow of Dudley Castle. The land was partially reclaimed from a former railway goods yard and disused lime kilns and former coal pits, though there have been further additions.

A spokesman for the museum said: "The story of the Black Country is distinctive because of the scale, drama, intensity and multiplicity of the industrial might that was unleashed here."

Identity

"Lying in the long shadow of Britain's second city, Birmingham, the Black Country has, through its manufactures and its people established its own very particular identity. The industrial landscape was entirely new at the time and the

scene – 'black by day and red by night' – horrified and fascinated contemporaries.

"Our mission at the Museum is 'to engage hearts and minds through the best use of our collections to inspire the widest possible audience about the story of the Black Country – the world's first industrial landscape'."

The museum recreates life as it might have been during the 19th and early 20th century thanks to a group of volunteers, who populate houses and shops.

It has managed to preserve a nucleus of Black Country industrial buildings, bridges and street furnishings and there are also extensive collections of equipment, products and other facets of everyday life, including retail businesses, community life objects and domestic furnishings. In all there are 61,000 items in the museum's collections.

Among the most impressive elements of its collection are historic buildings, including a backyard chainshop, brass foundry, cast iron houses, locksmith's house, nailshop, pitt's cott and trap shop.

The backyard chainshop was originally situated at Claremont Street, in Cradley Heath, and features hearth and bellows for men and women. The brass foundry was also known as a tub shop and was built in Shaw Street, Walsall, in 1869.

It had space for two casters with a barrelling and polishing room next door.

Molten brass was poured into moulds and the methods are recreated to this day.

The cast iron houses, meanwhile, were built in Dudley in 1925 and were constructed from 600 panels of cast iron, bolted together and lined with asbestos. Only four were ever made because they proved so costly.



Many of the costumed characters have an interesting tale to tell

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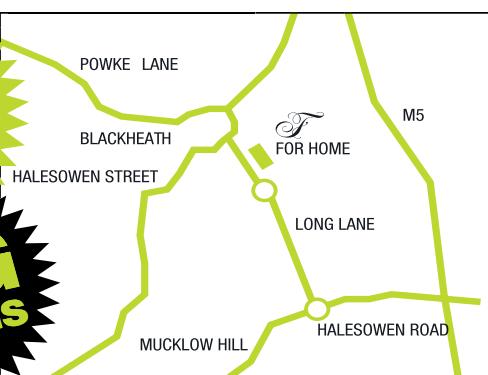
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REVIEWS

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Voice of Mac is back

Stevie Nicks

- In Your Dreams

One of the most distinctive voices in rock, Nicks' nasal vibrato is a key element in the supergroup Fleetwood Mac but her solo career – with the exception of *Rooms On Fire* – has seldom matched her promise.

However, new collaborator guitarist and former Eurythmic-turned-producer Dave Stewart has coaxed a performance from the 63-year-old hippy rock chick. He provides the music to her lyrics, some autobiographical in a Mac-like way. Their duet *Cheaper Than Free* is one of the best tracks.

There is a country influence on the soft rock balladry, an avenue that could be further explored. *Tribute New Orleans* is well-intentioned but bland. The stark, folk-like Soldier's Angel is more effective. Highlights include the Californian pop of *In Your Dreams*, slow-burning sexy rocker *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the Kinks/McColl-like bonus track *My Heart*.

Mac completists should note her bandmates Lindsey Buckingham and Mick Fleetwood contribute too.

Leon Burakowski

Foster The People

- Torches

Indie-pop band Foster The People made a major splash with their single *Pumped Up Kicks* and their album offers more of the same light, indie fun with *Helena*, *Beats* and *Waste*. The album is a definite listen for fans of MGMT and Black Kids but as the album progresses it moves towards lo-fi dance with *Life on the Nickel* and *Miss You*.

While the album is a summery, feel-good effort, it is hard to not start licking your lips at the prospect of what Foster The People could deliver on their 'difficult' second album. This is an excellent debut and a superb foundation to build on.

Opener *You're So Cool* could be mistaken for Hole in their heyday, while thumping riffs in *Cry Baby* and *Milk Teeth* ensures it never strays too far away from metal.

Singer Romily Alice will always have comparisons to Courtney Love but her voice rescues an album that could be a struggle without her easy-on-the-ears vocals.

Stevie Nicks – her new album is a collaboration with Dave Stewart, formerly of The Eurythmics

Peggy Sue - Acrobats

- You're So Cool

The second outing from Brighton-based indie-folk trio is a typically brooding affair. *Cut My Teeth* sets the scene perfectly but there are more grinding riffs and it twists from the XX to early Yeah Yeah Yeah's – an intriguing mix. By the time closers *Shadows* and *There Always Was Echo* from the speakers there's an

feeling of reaching the end of a journey, with *Parking Meter Blues* and *Boxes* highlights along the way.

Japanese Voyeurs
- York

Classed as alternative metal but throughout York there are glints of all types of music, from grunge to pop, indie to metal, it's all in there. Within minutes of listening it fills you with warmth as its strings wrap around you.

The rest of the album fails

to live up to it, with Iris and Cassandra coming closest.

As the pace picks up, the lyrics become more prominent. With hints of Laura Marling, the lyrics are the stand-out aspect of this album, you may not be whistling the tunes but you will definitely be mulling over the meanings of each song.

Kitty, Daisy and Lewis

- Smoking In Heaven

A joy of a summer album. Straight from the off, a mixture of reggae and soul means you can almost feel the warmth of the sun.

Don't Make A Fool Of Me shows the rockabilly influences while *Baby Don't You Know About Me* explains why Amy Winehouse was a fan.

The schizophrenic effects of such a broad range of influences begins to take its toll, especially on *What Quid?*, a seven minute jazz instrumental. The late Amy Winehouse's influence is wholly apparent throughout.

S.C.U.M

- Again Into Eyes

Art-rock quintet S.C.U.M have a mysterious, well-crafted sound. Thomas Cohen's vocals recall David Bowie and Interpol while electronic beats and crunching riffs provide the backdrop for this stunning debut. There are some truly euphoric moments hidden among the 10 tracks, most notably on *Days Untrue*. Lead single *Amber Hands* unveils a murkier side to the album while *Paris* provides a heartbreak ballad.

Big Deal - Lights Out

The latest boy/girl duo to unleash melodic indie-pop, Big Deal look set to make the niche their own. With a stripped back sound, beautiful double-edged vocals and brooding lyrics, Alice Costelloe and KC Underwood are a fresh sound. The chemistry between the pair is apparent on *Chair and Swoon*, while *Homework* is as pretty as it is stark.

Jon Pritchard

NEW ALBUMS



Stevie Nicks – her new album is a collaboration with Dave Stewart, formerly of The Eurythmics

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Singer Romily Alice will always have comparisons to Courtney Love but her voice rescues an album that could be a struggle without her easy-on-the-ears vocals.

Emmy The Great - Virtue

Emmy The Great's second effort is as haunting as it is beautiful. It opens with the strangely titled *Dinosaur Sex*, but don't let that fool you, within minutes of listening it fills you with warmth as its strings wrap around you.

The rest of the album fails

to live up to it, with Iris and Cassandra coming closest.

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Jon Pritchard

thechronicle

Out and about on summer



This weekend Sherlock visits Victorian town in Shropshire

BUDDING private detectives can help Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson solve a mysterious crime, which is taking place at Blisits Hill Victorian Town in the Ironbridge Gorge this weekend, August 13 and 14.

Try your hand at forensic science, taking fingerprints, printing reward posters and matching plaster cast bootprints at the Sherlock Holmes Weekend. It is part of a programme of days out, exhibitions and festivals celebrating the 25th anniversary of Ironbridge Gorge being designated as one of the UK's first World Heritage Sites back in 1986.

Follow the trail of clues around the open-air museum and put your powers of deduction to the test helping the eccentric Great Detective and his trusty companion solve the curious case of the Earl of Craven's treasure. Mrs Hudson, the intrepid duo's housekeeper at 221b Baker Street in London, will be joining them on their visit to Shropshire and there will also be a Hansom cab to transport them around the town.

Blisits Hill is one of the 10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums. A Passport to all of them valid for twelve months and unlimited return visits, costs £22.50 per adult, £18.25 for the 60 plus, £14.75 for students and children and £61.50 for a family of two adults and three children aged up to 18 years in full time education; under 5s free. Individual museum entry tickets are available. The museums are open seven days a week from 10am until 5pm; activities and workshops vary day-to-day and some carry an extra charge in addition to the admission fee. For further information, contact 01952 433 424 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk. The gorge is easily reached via the M6 and M54 motorways exiting at Telford (M54 junction 4 or 6).

More fun at Cadbury World

A HOST of family friendly entertainment is being offered at Cadbury World this summer aimed at keeping the children happy during the school holidays.

The Bourneville chocolate factory will also be hosting a 20ft climbing wall throughout August. It is inviting children to discover tube slides, tunnels and climbing zones at its new African Adventure outdoor play area too. Indoors there are 14 different zones to explore with visitors able to experience the magical Cadabra ride as well as come face to face with the famous drum-playing gorilla... and lots of opportunities to eat chocolate. Diane Mitchell, marketing manager, said: "Come rain or shine, there are lots of exciting things for the whole family to enjoy at Cadbury World this summer." For more information see the www.cadburyworld.co.uk website. Family tickets for two adults and two children cost £43.20.

Museum reaches new heights

THIS summer holiday the Royal Air Force Museum at Cosford has created a range of interactive August Activities to keep the children entertained and having fun.

Children will be able to have a go on a climbing wall up to the height of nearly 30 feet. Several routes have varying difficulty levels and instructors will be on hand. Tickets for the climb cost £3 and can be bought on the day. To take part children have to be at least 1.1 metre tall. If you're planning on visiting the museum at weekends, the Cold War Investigation Trail keeps young detectives busy with prize for every successful participant. The museum is open daily 10am – 6pm. For further information on August Activities and other events at the RAF Museum, contact 01902 376200 or visit the website www.rafmuseum.org. Admission to the museum is free but there is a parking charge.



Our superhero takes to the skies above Gotham City



Hero or villain - Catwoman could be the love interest



Any clues from the Riddler?

Penguin - oldest enemy

Holy smoke - it's Batman live

THE BAT is back and this time it's in person when DC Comics' superheroes Batman and Robin are reunited - in Birmingham.

The Batmobile roars into the city with for seven performances of Batman Live at the NIA between Wednesday, August 17, and Sunday, August 21, as part of a world arena tour.

The adventures of the Dark Knight have been enjoyed in comics, blockbuster movies and even a rather cringe television show famous for its theme tune, but the modern day Batman is probably most popular with youngsters today for his video game adventures, has never before been seen in such a spectacular live action show.

Circus

Two and a half years in the making, 43-strong cast of actors and trained acrobats and a 3D set constructed with actual constructions with video animation will bring Batman and Gotham City to life, along with the visual impact of a 100-foot bat-shaped LED video wall and an atmospheric symphonic score.

Of course, Batman and Robin would have little to do other than skulk around the Batcave without the super-villains, and all your favourite anti-heroes will be putting in an appearance.

The rogues' gallery features The Joker, The Penguin, The Riddler, Harley Quinn, Poison Ivy and - hero or villain



The Birmingham NIA shows are at 7pm from Thursday to Saturday with extra shows at 11am and 3pm on the Saturday. Sunday's show is at 3pm only. Ticket prices (excluding booking fee) range from £20 to £35 and there are also limited availability of premium 'Gotham City' seats. Call 0844 338 8000 or visit theticketfactory.com online. See www.thenia.co.uk or www.batmanlive.com for more details on the show.

Comics characters and stories, the story for Batman Live focuses on Robin's thirst for revenge (or should that be quest for justice?) after the murder of his family which leads him to seek out the

mysterious vigilante known as the Batman, much to the dismay of his guardian, billionaire Bruce Wayne, who secretly is Batman.

The adventure will transport the audience across Gotham City from the Big Top to the Batcave, taking in Penguin's Iceberg Lounge and Arkham Asylum for the criminally insane.

With acrobatic stunts, amazing aerial action, choreographed fight scenes and the all-new Batmobile - redesigned by F1 racing car designer Professor Gordon Murray - it adds up to a unique experience for comic book fans to see their heroes in the costumed flesh.

Incredible

"Batman will be brought to life through this incredible stage show," said Brad Globe, President of Warner Bros Consumer Products.

"As one of the most iconic characters in all of popular culture, Batman enjoys universal appeal and we think that fans of all ages will be amazed."

That's quite a promise but judging by reviews of performances so far - the show has already played in Manchester, Newcastle, Glasgow and this week Sheffield - it's been described as a thrilling family show.

Much attention is given to the staging and costumes, not surprising considering the show is rumoured to have cost more than £7 million to create.



Batman and Robin appear in Birmingham from August 17



Harley Quinn - aka Dr Harleen Frances Quinzel



Primary enemy - Poison Ivy Joker - master criminal

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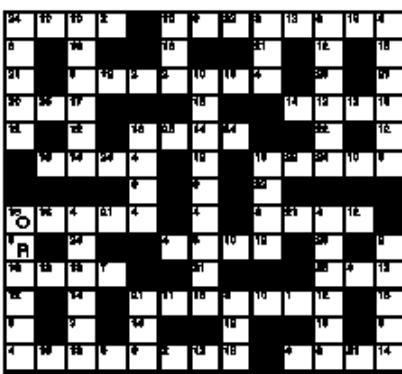
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Brain Gym

No. 129

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

Y	H	K	W	E	R	J	L	P	A	G	I	Z
C	Q	B	T	X	D	U	O	V	S	F	N	M

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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Effects a change of back of sea (6,2)
- Unit in money (8)
- Man of many parts, perhaps (9)
- Gets whatever deserves, setting a share (9)
- Is it for the feed foisted? (4,8)
- Nothing costs solely for itself (6)
- Revised and altered a good about it (11)
- Exercising in battle for ears (7)
- Split returns after the French animal appears (8)
- Parade. In April? (5,4)
- It's eaten in abundance (8)
- The chief rangers don't get trusted, I suspect (14,7)

Down

- The grain sounds twisted (8)
- Closes in on a mortal's arsenal (9)
- Possibly stays in the woods (8)
- Scolded, finding birds in bed (7)
- Last word in the Latin language (9)
- Accept that tourists won't want to (4,2,9)
- Will be presented by a group of one (5,2)
- Check the power to strengthen the situation (9)
- Started as a safety pressurisation (7)
- Welcome break for a passenger? (6)
- Base on the down road pressure? (8,2)
- But it won't be a Hindrance to drink! (8)

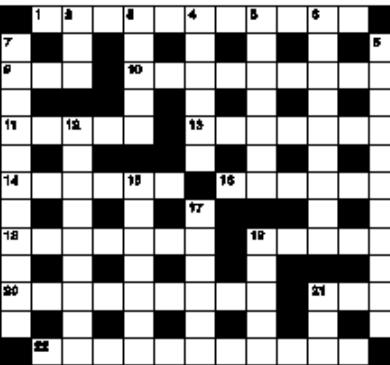
Quick Clues:

Across

- Adapt (11)
- Look on (8)
- Rhyme (9)
- Red Indian tent (9)
- Philosopher (7)
- 3-electrode valve (6)
- Road (6)
- Finger and guard (7)
- Wimp (6)
- Difficult (10)
- Successful (8)
- Distinctive characteristic (11)

Down

- Snookered (8)
- Anomaly (12)
- Gimlets (8)
- Chronicler (7)
- Desire (9)
- Poverty (11)
- Unkindness (11)
- Protegée (9)
- Loveless (7)
- Steamer (6)
- Makaray (5)
- Determined (8)

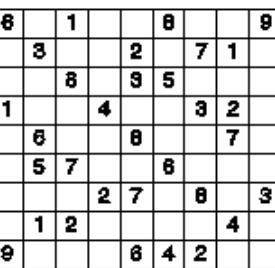


LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1. Passage, 2. Spineless, 3. Optical, 10. Clever, 11. Express, 12. Tink, 13. Scary, 14. Chatterbox, 15. Index, 21. Chilling, 22. Blowing, 23. Sust. Cross: 1. Property, 2. Catty, 3. Public, 4. Industries, 5. Twin, 6. Head, 8. Showdown, 12. Express, 13. Industrial, 14. Studio, 15. Film. QUICK - Across: 1. Quill, 2. Conservatory, 3. Fiddle, 10. Cover, 11. Extravagant, 13. Elated, 15. Stew, 17. Student, 18. 20. Cover, 21. Extravagant, 22. Sust. Cross: 2. Fiddle, 4. Cover, 10. Different, 12. Stew, 14. Fiddle, 15. Extravagant, 16. Cover, 18. Quill, 19. Cover.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
1. 6 1 8 2 7 1
3 8 9 5
2. 6 8 7
1 4 3 2
5 7 6
3. 2 7 8 3
1 2 4
9 6 4 2

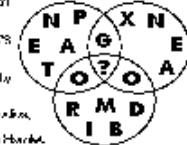


Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

The letter represented by the question mark is 'I'. Outback, Cloudless, Pictures, all done with in hand.



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You want to buy a second-hand car.

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There are many ways to search at

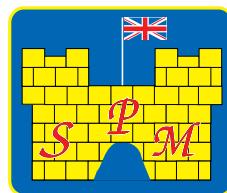


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KINGSWINFOR NEW



PENZER STREET

£575 ppcm

Semi-Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Single Garage

OLDSWINFOR NEW



THE FURLONGS

£550 ppcm

Semi-detached cottage, Front lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom with shower, two bedrooms, loft room, gas central heating, carpets & curtains, part double glazing, unfurnished.

GORNAL NEW



EATON CRESCENT

£570 ppcm

Semi-Detached Bungalow, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Garage, Unfurnished.

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RAGEES ROAD

£335 ppcm

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WORDSLY NEW



CROWNOAKES DRIVE

£550 ppcm

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QUEEN STREET

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COLLEY GATE NEW



WINDMILL HILL

£450 ppcm

First Floor Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, Unfurnished, Electric Heating, Off Road Parking, Recently Refreshed, Available Immediately.

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TIPTON



SARAH CLOSE

£475 ppcm

Semi-detached property. Lounge, Kitchen, Two bedrooms, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, carpets and curtains. Unfurnished.

GRATHAM CLOSE

£675 ppcm

Detached Property, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Area, Kitchen, Utility, Conservatory, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Drive & Garage

EAGLE PLACE

£360 ppcm

Apartment, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Conservatory, Seven Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Private Parking, Security Entrance Door

GRACE ROAD

£495 ppcm

Modern apartment. Lounge, Kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms, electric heating, double glazing, carpets and curtains.

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STOURBRIDGE



TIPTON



GORNAL



HAWKESWELL DRIVE

£550 ppcm

Mid terrace, Lounge, Kitchen, cloakroom, two bedrooms, bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, front & rear gardens, off road parking. Carpets & curtains. Unfurnished.

BREDON ROAD

£595 ppcm

End Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, WC, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

AVERN CLOSE

£360 ppcm

Purpose built flat, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

CENTRAL DRIVE

£525 ppcm

Mid Terrace Property, Entrance Hall, Lounge/Diner, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Double Glazing, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

KINGSWINFORD



OAKFIELD AVENUE

£795 ppcm

Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Four Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front & Rear Gardens, Garage & Off Road Parking, Unfurnished

DUDLEY



STOURBRIDGE ROAD

£510 ppcm

Terrace property, Lounge, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom, gas central heating, carpets & curtains, rear garden. Unfurnished.

WORDSLY



LAWNSWOOD ROAD

£795 ppcm

Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Office, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking, Garage

KINGSWINFORD



THE PORTWAY

£380 ppcm

First Floor Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Partial Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished.

ROWLEY REGIS



STUART ROAD

£575 ppcm

Semi-Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Front & Rear

KINGSWINFORD



RANGEWAYS ROAD

£725 ppcm

Link-Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, WC, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Carpets & Curtains, Unfurnished

ROWLEY REGIS



TITFORD LANE

£345 ppcm

End Terrace Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Allocated Parking, Unfurnished

NETHERTON



SIMMS LANE

£525 ppcm

End Terrace Property, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Off Road Parking, Front & Rear Gardens

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Apartment in new conversion priced at £145K

This ground floor apartment is within the Old School House, and forms part of a superb conversion.

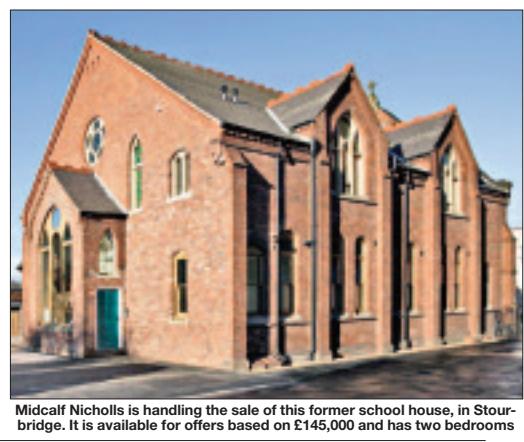
The accommodation retains a wealth of original features and has a real "wow factor" – and comes with a price guide of £145,000.

The property at New Road, Stourbridge, benefits from under-floor heating, wooden floors, double glazing, pressurised hot water system, kitchen with granite work surfaces and integrated appliances, and luxury sanitary ware to both bath and shower rooms.

Accommodation comprises communal entrance accessible via an intercom, entrance door into open plan living space with well-defined sitting and kitchen areas, bedroom one with en suite bathroom, bedroom two and luxury shower room.

There is allocated parking to the rear of the property which offers secure ease-of-living in a convenient location, just a stone's throw from town centre amenities and public transport links.

For further details, or to arrange a viewing, contact the agent, Midcalf Nicholls, on 01384 443434.



Much improved semi in a sought after area



An attractive, traditional-style semi-detached home, situated in a popular location of Wolverhampton and well situated for local amenities, is for sale with a price guide of £169,950.

Tastefully presented the property – 43 The Avenue, Castlecroft – has undergone improvements including uPVC double glazing and gas central heating.

Internally the accommodation comprises reception hall, living room, dining room, refitted kitchen, utility, conservatory, three bedrooms and refitted bathroom.

The property is approached via a driveway providing off-road parking and giving access to the garage, a useful boiler room and enclosed entrance porch.

The reception hall has stairs to the first-floor landing and doors into the living room and kitchen. The living

room measures 15ft 10in by 11ft 9in, with double doors leading into the dining room – which has a sliding patio door to the rear.

The kitchen – 8ft 8in by 8ft 4in – has a tiled floor, part-tiled walls, a range of wall, drawer and base units with roll edge work surfaces.

There is space for a cooker and an archway leading to the utility area which is fitted with units, worktop and has space for a washing machine and dryer. A door gives access to the garage and double doors lead through to the conservatory, which has double doors to a rear patio.

Upstairs are three bedrooms and a family bathroom with double-ended bath and electric shower above. To the rear of the property is a paved patio area and lawn.

Call Sanders, Wright & Freeman on 01902 575555 for further information.

Modern two-bedrooomed flat is seen as a possible investment

A well-presented ground floor apartment on Monkgate Drive, West Bromwich – currently let for £550 a month – is being marketed as an ideal investment opportunity or perfect home.

The property is thoughtfully located in a highly desirable development only completed in late 2003, and benefits from laminated flooring in the 14ft 10in by 12ft lounge.

The fitted kitchen, measuring 9ft 8in by 6ft 7in, has a matching range of wall and floor based storage units, standard steel sink, roll-top work surfaces, electric cooker point, plumbing for washing machine and central heating boiler.

The 6ft 4in by 5ft 11in bathroom has a panelled bath, pedestal wash hand basin and is partly tiled.

Bedroom one is 10ft 8in by 5ft 11in, while the second bedroom measures 10ft 1in by 5ft 11in.

There are well-kept communal gardens and allocated parking.

It is priced at £85,000.

Visit www.SALES4FREE.co.uk for further details.



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MOTORING

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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Far Eastern car brands top reliability chart

THE MOST reliable second-hand cars are those made in Japan and Korea, according to a new survey.

But although European cars are more prone to faults, the cost of repairing them is cheaper, the survey by What Car? magazine and warranty company Warranty Direct found.

Honda topped the most reliable used car table, which was based on the number of faults occurring in a year for cars between three and eight years of age.

Toyota was the second most reliable second-hand car, followed by

Suzuki, Lexus, Mitsubishi and Mazda.

According to the survey, there was only a nine per cent chance of a Honda having a fault in 12 months.

In contrast, there was a 55 per cent chance of a fault in a Land Rover, which was 35th, and bottom, in the reliability table. At the foot of the table were Saab, (in 32nd place), Renault (33rd) and Alfa Romeo (34th).

However, Renault was one of the cheapest cars to repair, with average repair costs of £242.22. Only Fiat (£241.63) had cheaper repair costs.

In contrast, Porsche (£689.99) had the highest average repair costs, with Mazda in second place at £462.58.

What Car? editor Chas Hallett said: "This year's study is a stark reminder of the disparity in reliability between Far Eastern brands, which dominate the top 10, and European brands, which contribute the bulk of the bottom 10."

These were the most reliable used cars in terms of the chances of faults in 12 months:

1. Honda
2. Toyota
3. Suzuki
4. Lexus
5. Mitsubishi
6. Mazda



Toyota Yaris is high on the list of most reliable

7. Subaru
8. Hyundai
9. Kia
10. Nissan

Honda Jazz which is one of the most reliable used cars on the market



These

reliable, with
Land Rover
at the bottom of
the table:
22%."

were
the least

"Honda topped the most reliable used car table"

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51 Reg FORD PUMA 1.7 COUPE 3-dr. Silver, supplied by us	£1995
51 Reg VAUXHALL OMEGA MV6 SALOON AUTOMATIC Silver, The ultimate Omega	£1995
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N Reg LANDROVER DISCOVERY 2.5 TD5 DIESEL 7 SEATER	£2100 NOW £1295
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03 Reg VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB 1.0 5-dr Hatch. Only 50,000 miles, ideal first car	£2995
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New people's car updates history

By Iain Dooley

VOLKSWAGEN is pitching its new Beetle as a car for the 21st century. In common with so many fashionable items from the past, it would be appropriate to view this as a reboot of the classic automotive icon.

Of course Volkswagen has been here before. 1998 saw the release of the then all-new Beetle, which was an attempt at faithfully reproducing the earnest, everyday attributes of its groundbreaking predecessor.

The Beetle is the cornerstone of the Volkswagen family, and is largely why the German firm is persisting with a modern day version.

And it appears to have learnt something from the success of the competition. This "New Beetle" is being promoted with a sportier edge and a greater emphasis on lifestyle and pop culture.

The car is little bigger than the 1998 car – a fraction longer and wider – while it's not as tall but more streamlined in profile thanks to a longer bonnet and more steeply inclined windscreen.

Occupants

Carrying capacity is up and occupants fore and aft benefit from more room, while boot space has increased.

Three petrol and one diesel unit will power UK cars. At launch, the choice will be between a 1.2 TSI 105 horsepower unit connected to a seven-speed DSG gearbox plus a 1.4 TSI, 160 horsepower lump and six-speed manual gearbox. Later in 2012 you'll also have the choice of a manual version of that 1.2 petrol motor, a 1.6-litre TDI diesel and a range-topping 2.0-litre TSI petrol unit packing 200 horsepower.

To reinforce the Beetle's new sporty character, both the 2.0-litre car and the 1.4 variant feature Volkswagen's trick XDS differential to boost grip and stability at speed.

The previous car's bud vase might have disappeared but this Beetle's cabin remains sufficiently different from anything else Volkswagen makes to earn its stripes.

The cabin is roomy enough up front, with just enough space in the back for adults if the journey isn't too long.

The sloping roof is the reason for this, although children won't feel cramped.

Like all modern Volkswagens, the Beetle isn't short of toys or safety kit. The company decided to pitch the car higher, and satnav, climate control, premium audio, leather and a panoramic glass roof are all on the options list.



"The Beetle is the cornerstone of the Volkswagen family, and is largely why the German firm is persisting with a modern day version."

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Best wishes Ian.

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Own house, car owner, works as
a Manager would like to meet,
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Will return to all
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top of the range van,
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balcony, fully furnished, beauti-
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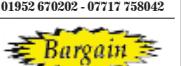
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MOTORHOME**
1994, 23 ft, excellent condition.
Diesel engine, cooker, fridge,
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beds, swivel front seats,
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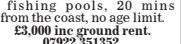


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Wales, low ground rent with
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Mountain, 32x10, 2 bunks, 6 mth,
sun roof, 4 berth, ideal family
site. Beddedger, Porthmadog area.
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TWO BED STATIC CARAVAN
33 x 10ft, with decking, quiet
site. Llanbrynmair, mid Wales,
2 fishing pools, 20 mins
from the coast, no age limit.
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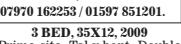


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crockery, cutlery, pots and
more. Good letting
income. Try before you buy.
£26,995 omo. 07970 776861.



WILLERBY VOGUE MK7
2bed, 6 berth, immaculate con-
dition, with a UVPC

double glazing and central
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£3,000 omo.

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Litter trained and wormed, ready
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urgently needs a home and an
owner who is willing to put in
hard work.

£4,950.

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dark blue, auto, long MOT,
72k, immaculate, minor C.
£2,500. 01902 634247.

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2000 reg, live door hatchback,
metallic blue and grey 1.3i,
petrol, 60,000 miles, excellent
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FIAT PUNTO 1.2 Active Sport
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£2,200.

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Excellent condition.

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Zetec, 16v, 160bhp, grey
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grey hatch, MoT, 99k, FSH, alloys,
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1.6, 16v, 160bhp, grey, 55,000 miles,
MoT,

properties wanted

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2001, 73,000 miles, silver, electric windows, central locking, pas, alloys, 5 months tax, 6 months MoT, excellent runner, great first car!!! £1,150.00.
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women seeking men

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JEAN 71, fun loving Shropshire lady, seeks caring gent of similar age, GSOH, N/S for companionship/outings. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373657

FARMER's granddaughter, OHAC, stunningly attractive, respectable, sincere, WLTM countryman/bachelor, 48-62, 5ft 9ins plus, genuine, uncomplicated with GSOH and TLC. Herefordshire. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 387204

27YR old sensible beautiful female, genuine and fun to be with seeking genuinely romantic male for mutual spoiling. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373017

MICHELLE 23, gorgeous, curvaceous, brown eyes WLTM nice guy for friendship, maybe leading to more. Looks unimportant. Single dad welcome. ACA. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 372669

KIRSTY 36 attractive, blonde and very bored, seeking open-minded discreet decent male who can accommodate for adult fun friendship, 40-60yrs. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373013

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Impulsive curly blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 363428

29YR old large black female looking for much older male, up to 70yrs, for naughty friendship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 370017

NAUGHTY female 50 WLTM male 69yrs plus who knows what he is doing for mutual appreciation and fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 365061

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 384852

BRUNETTE 39, petite, brown eyes, seeks energetic guy for fun and friendship. Age/status unimportant. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 371551

HOME alone with no one to call my own! 38y old naughty girl looking for fun. Can travel. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 363277

SLIM attractive lady with long auburn hair just wants to have a good time with likeminded older guy up to 75yrs. Looks/status unimportant. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 368119

FUN female, uniformed, civil servant, attractive, average build, GSOH, seeks tall, professional, N/S male with GSOH for relationship. Willenhall. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 367485

BIG is beautiful! Female looking for someone to share a life time of happiness with. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 368528

POLLY dark hair, 50, attractive, outgoing, seeks special outgoing male for days out etc. Telford. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 371127

5FT 1in female, GSOH, seeks 5ft 5ins plus, well built male with GSOH for fun, fun, fun. W Midlands. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 365743

SLIM female, 5ft 9ins, blonde, likes weekends away, meals out, seeks half-some chap to court me, then maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 359295

LINDA 70's, likes theatre, dancing, seeks nice gent for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 355891

CURVY red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks older male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 374323

LOVING caring young 67yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim size 12, brown hair, likes meat cuts, GSOH, smoker, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH. 58-62. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 364651

WENDY dark hair/eyes, medium build, seeks male for friendship and what happens. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 361589

I'M attractive, very tactile with an hourglass figure, looking for fun and good times. Can you help? Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 368889

YOUNG at heart blue eyed blonde, bubbly, fun loving, petite, pretty, likes to keep in shape, seeks similar genuine guy to be her Mr Right. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 372669

PROFESSIONAL independent lady, 49, slim, blonde, attractive, varied interests, seeks intelligent, romantic, sincere, genuine male with GSOH for companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 354533

YVETTE pretty, tall, blonde, 44, outgoing, bubbly, sporty, seeks male for night ins. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 351997

ATTRACTIVE female, 45, slim, affectionate, intelligent, seeks honest, caring male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 301001

SHROPSHIRE female, 40, seeking friend/relationship with a genuine male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 3503071

ATTRACTIVE nurse, 48, 5ft 6ins, cinema, theatre, meals out, pubs, walks, holidays, seeks genuine, trustworthy male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 341479

KIND romantic, loving lady, 43, slight disability, seeks genuine caring male for relationship. Telford. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 359855

WHITE 50's genuine modern West Brom female, divorced, easygoing, seeks it modern male, 50-60 for LTR. Car owner preferred. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 358865

SHROPSHIRE lady, 61, likes countryside, sea, travel, cooking, sewing, farm, seeks special genuine gent for nice match. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 334241

ATTRACTIVE nurse, 48, 5ft 6ins, cinema, theatre, meals out, pubs, walks, holidays, seeks genuine, trustworthy male. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 316619

CARING and honest lady, 61, 5ft 2ins, WLTM very caring and honest gentleman. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357985

HANDSOME kind, 50, 5ft 5ins, sociable, friendly, understanding, loving, seeks male, 30-36 to enjoy romantic nights. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 317945

SINGLE mom, non drinker, seeks male for nights out, meals and lots of fun. Dudley. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 353085

SLIM attractive female, 47, seeks attractive, slim, 5ft 5ins, sociable, friendly, understanding, loving, seeks male who is genuine and caring. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 356761

ATTRACTIVE tall, black female, 5ft 6ins, medium build, kind, honest, considerate, own home, seeks genuine, tall, faithful, 6ft plus male, 45-70 with own home for serious relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349211

53YR old female, young at heart, likes cinema, theatre, meals out, pubs, walks, holidays, seeks genuine, trustworthy male. 48-56. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 340857

FEMALE 51, slim, 5ft 4ins, genuine, caring, seeks soul mate who is genuine and caring. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 357661

SLIM professional, attractive, amiable lady, 55, seeks genuine, articulate, professional gent, 55 plus with GSOH and enjoys the good things in life. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 350397

FRIENDLY black female, 48, single mum, professional, seeks attractive, solvent, trendy, professional, genuine male for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 349865

ATTRACTIVE glamorous, black female, young 44, seeks male for friendship/dating and LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 362226

GENUINE caring, mid 60's female, many interests, GSOH, seeks kind, gentle, loyal male for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 339799

PETITE dark haired lady, 43, size 10, seeks considerate, N/S male, 25-50 for fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 338651

VAENESSA fun loving single mum, 5ft 4ins, brown eyes, seeks kind, genuine male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 304135

28YR old blonde, seeks fun loving, adventurous male for relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 380918

LADY 76, N/S, caring, respectable, WLTM gentleman, 70-76 for outings, holidays, date trips and friendship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 340201

TRACEY seeks special N/S, easygoing, loving, caring, loyal male to share life with. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 335781

KAREN 47, 5ft 9ins, civil servant, attractive, down to earth, likes drink, dance, socialising, home life, seeks tall, professional male, N/S for loving relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 324349

6FT tall Shropshire male, 62, divorced, dark hair, medium build, fun loving, varied interests. WLTM similar lady, 50-64 for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 371675

MALE 34, attractive, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, seeks slim male for fun relationship. Any area, can travel. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 311892

LOVING female looking for similar male or female for open relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 371781

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IAN 45, genuine, good condition, outgoing, likes travel, seeks a lady who wants to meet a nice guy. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 367093

BLACK male, 35, 5ft 11ins, shaved head, successful, seeks lady, 25-40 for friendship, leading to relationship. Wolverhampton. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 368709

GLAMOROUS granny 60-65 required by George 54 for fun. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 362663

GENUINE male, 54, own home, seeks female, any age for fun. Wolverhampton. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 368871

MALE 57, no ties, good looking, N/S, seeks mature female to end loneliness and become soul mates forever. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 372737

MARK 44, hurt in past, caring, honest, faithful, looking for love with lady to share heart with and spoil. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373393

DAVID 54, active, looking for female, 22-58 for fun and friendship. Stafford. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373387

BRIGHT bubbly, adventurous, outgoing, honest, trustworthy female, same and find me. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 305925

TOM genuine professional male, 50, likes nights in/out, many interests, seeks genuine female for relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373351

MARK 49, affectionate, easygoing, caring, fun loving, seeking similar female. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 361871

LADY 70's, seeks gent of similar age for friendship, days out and holidays. Dudley. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 361043

BRIAN 54, active, looking for female, 22-58 for fun and friendship. Stafford. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 373387

WHITE male, 50, seeks lady interested in fun and lasting friendship. Any age/looks/nationality. Wolverhampton. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 367555

JOHN 6ft 2ins, fit, likes gym, holidays, socialising, dogs, seeks nice, fit female for relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 372563

SINCERE honest male, young 60's, intelligent, caring, likes music, outdoors, arts, theatre, film, seeks intelligent, attractive female, 50 plus with style and wit. Shropshire. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 372379

ATTRACTIVE tall, honest guy, 48, polite, respectful with GSOH, seeks female for fun relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 371823

ATTRACTIVE soul girl wanted, 40-55, N/S. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 362611

ANY honest lady out there? Sincere male, 65, fit, young looking, N/S, likes cooking, meals out, seeks female fun, 59-68 for LTR. West Midland. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 371219

ATTRACTIVE professional, male, 43, kind, caring, likes travel, romance, dining, seeks attractive lady, 35-50 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 370823

WEST Bromwich male, 46, 5ft 8ins, fair hair, hazel eyes, seeks female, 20-45 for relationship. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 358643

RICHARD 47, seeks mature, curvy, full figured lady who is sincere and nice for LTR. Tel No: 0905 436 6562 Box No: 370399

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sport

BATTLING STOUR HOLD ON FOR DRAW

Pershore (14pts) 198,
Stourbridge (8pts) 151-7. Draw

STOURBRIDGE held out for a draw in the Worcester League first versus second battle.

Neither side could control a topsy-turvy match until the final 10 overs when Stourbridge held out to deny Pershore the win they needed.

Winning the toss, Pershore batted first and the first five overs produced 29 runs, mostly boundaries.

Under pressure and with no help from the wicket Stour showed early signs of witting, writes Harilan Patel.

But the persistence of pacemen James Musk and Matt Bradley paid off in the sixth over when Liam Riddings played a rash shot and was bowled by Bradley for 19 to end a quickfire opening stand of 29.

Opener White was next victim caught behind by Greg Jones for 13 off the bowling of Musk with the score on 48.

At 25 overs, Pershore were 68-2 and poised for a big score with captain Cianan Sanders and Chris Riddings both showing aggressive intent.

Kalpesh Patel tempted Riddings into a big shot on the leg side in the over after the break, Dave Jones taking a skier after a 30-yard sprint. Musk then had White caught behind for a duck in the next over reducing the visitors to 72-4. Pershore continued to score boundaries regularly as Ross Mathews and Sanders attempted to take Stour's bowlers to task.

Swung

Sanders' innings was ended abruptly on 37 by the brilliance of Richard Bradley's direct hit while aiming at one stump for 37.

With half the Pershore side back in the pavilion for 107 in the 33rd over the match had swung back in Stour's favour. But the Pershore tail wagged as Ross Mathews (32), Tim Smith (17), Joe Fowles (29) and Luke Dalley (12) took the score to 198-9 off the 50 overs. The 91 runs in 17 overs had put Pershore in a strong but not an invincible position. Musk took 3-45 and Jones 2-43.

Stour's batting had taken a blow with one of their main players, Josh Banks, sustaining a shoulder injury whilst fielding.

Their innings was also curtailed to 43 overs after a shower at the break.

Further setbacks came as Stour lost Steve Game for four in the third over lbw to Luke Dalley.

Captain Richard Bradley was out for 13 caught on the boundary off the bowling of Lee Wilkes. Matt Bradley, playing superbly, left the crease once too often and was stumped for 28 off spinner Wilkes.

The worst passage of play this season then left Stour's innings in tatters, falling from 88-3 in the 22nd over to 111-7 in the 33rd. Andy Alexander, Alex Bingham, Greg Jones, Mikes Patel

Stourbridge CC

all went cheaply leaving the tail exposed.

But James Musk anchored a fading innings. With Kalpesh Patel coming in at number nine, Pershore's bowlers opted to speed and bounce. But Patel and Musk stood fast and moved the score from 113 past 150 for valuable bonus points and also deprived opposition of an outright victory.

Musk, who finished 41 not out, smashed Lee Wilkes for a massive straight six off the penultimate delivery while Patel remained unbeaten on seven. Luke Dalley, Lee Wilkes and Tim Smith shared two wickets a piece.

The result has intensified competition below Stourbridge, with Astwood Bank CC moving into second position. But Stourbridge are 56 points clear.

• The seconds' match against Pershore was abandoned.

Stourbridge (24pts) 320-5,

Cleobury Mortimer (5pts)

177. Stourbridge won by

143 runs

Stourbridge thirds skipper Daniel De Saulles chose to bat and was rewarded by the knock of the season from 19-year-old Jitesh Patel who plundered 164 runs.

Another promising youngster, Will Jennings, played an admirable innings of 64 in the record 175 partnership for the second wicket. Patel's innings produced 33 boundaries – 80 per cent of his runs. All the bowlers suffered and Areeb Mohammed (29), Lawson Bliss (23) and Dan De Saulles (24) took the score well past the 300 mark.

Cleobury Mortimer were dismissed for 177. Shabir Butt taking the final five wickets with three of them bowled. Adam Jeavons had 3-76.

Cleobury Mortimer (18pts) 265-8, Stourbridge (3pts) 123-9. Draw

Fourth skipper Alex Dent chose to bowl after winning the toss only to see the opposition pile up the runs. Gareth Leach (51) and Oliver Rowland (91) exerted plenty of pressure on a young bowling side. But 16-year-old Heran Patel continued with his wicket taking form, bagging three.

Peter Griffiths (31) and Paul Bradley (30), two of the three seniors kept Stour in the match, but the last-wicket pair survived.

Ed Kemp was the pick of the bowlers, taking 4-11.

Swann glides in for the equaliser



Tividale's Brett Clarke gets a shot away in the draw at away at Ellesmere Rangers Picture: Ian Peters

Ellesmere Rangers 1

Tividale 1

NEWLY-PROMOTED Tividale opened their first season in the Midland Alliance with a creditable draw in Shropshire at Ellesmere Rangers, managed by ex-Wolves star Lee Mills.

The visitors opened brightly with full-back Jason Chilton earning the game's first corner on five minutes with a run down the left flank which led to the first of many one-on-one situations which brought a tremendous save from the Rangers keeper.

Tividale enjoyed the majority of the possession and produced some fine slick interplay which posed a constant threat to the home defence.

Leon Taylor, Kyle Hill and new-boy Matt Jukes missed good chances to open the scoring.

Indeed Jukes, one of several players making debuts for the Yellows, went close five minutes later when he hit the post from 15 yards.

Error

Tividale continued to look the most likely side to score but had a rare scare on 21 minutes when a defensive error let in Ellesmere's Chris Cathral.

His shot from 30 yards clipped the bar with goalkeeper Tim Beech stranded in no man's land.

The second half saw the match develop into a grid stalemate with both defences well on top until Ellesmere's Dan Price hit a screamer from 20 yards past Beech to give the home side a surprise lead on 70 minutes.

The goal stunned Tividale and the home side piled on the pressure with a series of corners.

To their credit the Tividale defence stood firm and they reacted positively to produce their best spell of football in the second half.

Roynon vows to ride until season's end

DUDLEY speedway star Adam Roynon has denied speculation that his season is over – and is determined to play his part in the Heathens' play-off push.

Roynon, who has just returned from a broken thigh after three months on the sidelines, has suffered a series of crashes in the handful of meetings he has raced in for both Heathens and

League leaders stay in pole position

A STRANGE day in the Worcester Cricket League had many people reaching for calculators as rain interrupted proceedings.

There were some huge team and individual scores, and some quite low ones, writes Chris Marsh.

Pershore's winning draw against leaders Stourbridge was rewarded only with a slip down the table as Astwood Bank over-

took them with victory away at Worcester. Nomads got back on the winning trail after a long lay-off and stay fourth after trouncing Droitwich, relying heavily on Steve Bowman's 116.

Oldswinford climbed above Worcester by beating basement side Romsley by 10 wickets, with 102 from Lee Nightingale, while Bromyard enjoyed a similarly easy win over Pedmore. Bewdley had

the better of a weather interrupted draw at Redditch but remain 35 points behind their relegation rivals.

In Division Two, leaders Coombs Wood won again, but Hagley could not force a win despite 134 from overseas star Chad Hitchcock. They are now seven points behind in second.

Colwall sit just two points further back in third after another

convincing performance, this week at Belbroughton.

The batting performance of the week undoubtedly came from Worcester Dominies who racked up a massive 481-8, which included 187 from Chris Miles and 123 from Jon Hancock.

However even a total as big as that wasn't a winning one as Kidderminster Victoria made 200-5 in 37 overs to claim a draw.

Clifton tipping former Saddler to take star role

FIRST TEAM coach Mark Clifton has tipped Sean Geddes to reignite his career at Stourbridge and insisted he can beat his Walsall demons.

The former Saddlers youngster, who was released in the summer, has signed for the Glassboys after failing to make a senior appearance at the Banks's Stadium.

He was highly-rated as a trainee but could not convince boss Dean Smith he was worthy of a new deal at the end of last season.

The 19-year-old is primed to make his debut in the league opener against Chippenham Town on Saturday and Clifton reckons the midfielder will be a star.

"I think he can go to another level," he said. "We've got great hopes for him and we've given him an opportunity so it's up to him to take it.

Experience

"He's come in and moved the ball around well for us and hopefully we can help him get to the next step. He's got experience and his awareness is phenomenal, we just need to calm him down and get him enjoying his football."

Geddes is joined by Aaron Griffiths, who made his loan from Kidderminster permanent, and boss Gary Hackett expects the former Saddler to overcome his disappointment.

"Sean is a young lad, he has been at Walsall, he has been a professional and he has had the disappointment of being released," he said. "We are going to get him enjoying his football again and I'm confident he can be a big player for us."

"We have a lot of competition in the middle of the park but we have adaptable players who can play in different positions. We need a strong squad if we are going to do anything."

Town are defeated in league opener

Dudley Town 0 Goodrich 2

TOWN started their West Midlands Premier season in disappointing fashion as Goodrich's new-look side deservedly took the points.

The hosts were left to rue several missed chances in the first half which, if taken, may have altered the outcome.

Naming his first team since his summer promotion to the managerial hot-seat, Andy Burgess elected to hand debuts to six of his summer recruits.

The Robins could have taken the lead in the fourth minute when newly appointed captain Richard Langford headed an Anthony Cox corner over the bar.

Goodrich made the breakthrough on 51 minutes.

Impressive

A free-kick on the edge of the area was placed home by the impressive Tim Jackson.

And the visitors extended their lead three minutes later.

The goal came when Jordan Lee capitalised on a mistake by Rob Whitley and chipped keeper Mark Garvey.

Dudley were looking to bounce back when they were due to host Bustleholme last night.

The Stourbridge Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford on Thursday, August 11, 2011.

Dudley fall to Cradley

Dudley Sports 1

Cradley Town 2

SPORTS' defensive laxity continued from last season as Cradley raced into a half-time lead.

They took the advantage with a brace of goals from Matthew Bailey.

The hosts improved after the break.

Alone strike by Craig Tibbles got them back into the game but failed to deny Cradley victory.



Action from Tipton Town's opening league match against Coleshill

Danny Campbell lost out to the home goalkeeper Sam Jones in yet another one-on-one.

Tonks struck a 62nd-minute winner for Tipton Town.

Last season's runners-up opened their Midland Alliance campaign with a victory at Tipton Sports Academy.

The Robins could have taken the lead in the fourth minute when newly appointed captain Richard Langford headed an Anthony Cox corner over the bar.

Goodrich made the breakthrough on 51 minutes.

The goal came when Jordan Lee capitalised on a mistake by Rob Whitley and chipped keeper Mark Garvey.

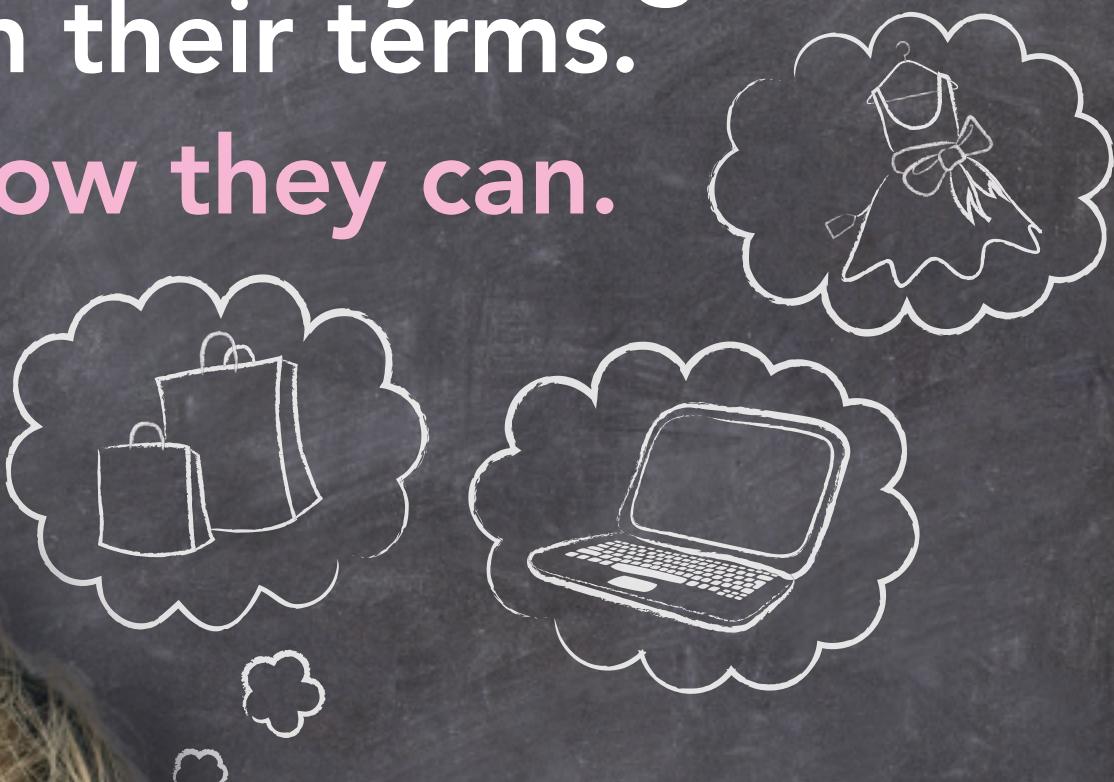
Dudley were looking to bounce back when they were due to host Bustleholme last night.

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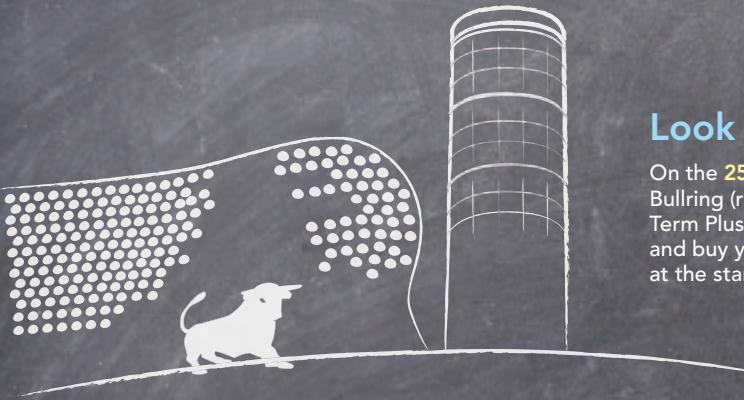
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